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Filipino American National Democratic Activism: A Lens to Seek Historical Justice for U.S. Imperialism in the Philippines

Melissa Manlulu Harris
Oberlin College

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Melissa Harris
Oberlin College Department of History Honors Candidate
Advisor: Professor Shelley Lee
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Introduction

Global methods of addressing historical injustices have transformed significantly over the past few decades, especially since the 1980s and 1990s and rising political pressure and demands from minority groups. However, many of these projects tend to occur within the domestic geopolitical setting of a country, whether reckoning with the horrors of the Holocaust in Germany or apartheid in South Africa. Internationally, nations are more reluctant to redress perpetrations that they have committed against other countries than within their own polities.[1] In American history, more specifically, little to none has been done to rectify the United States' historical injustices, both domestically and internationally. Historian James Campbell writes that the United States is "nation notoriously reluctant to confront the darker chapters of its own past,"[2] even disregarding or neglecting to address legacies of the enslavement of African Americans or the genocide of and land-grabbing from Indian Americans. When considering the United States' global role, empire is a term that Americans do not tend to associate with their nation; the master narrative is framed in terms of independence, freedom, and liberty—words that contradict the wrongdoings it has perpetrated both against its own people and abroad. Given that U.S. empire is a concept so infrequently discussed in American society, then, how do we begin to discuss rectifying American imperialism—more specifically, in the context of this paper, the Philippines?

Campbell argues that in the face of institutional resistance to historical redress, "the impetus for action has usually come from within aggrieved communities themselves, often from descendants of direct victims, demanding public recognition of the injuries inflicted on their

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[1] Daniel Butt, "Repairing Historical Wrongs and the End of Empire." *Social & Legal Studies* 21, no. 2 (2012): 232.

[2] James T. Campbell, "Settling Accounts? An Americanist Perspective on Historical Reconciliation." *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 4 (2009): 964.

forbearers."[3] Although African American and American Indian communities have a degree of visibility in making the American public aware of and taking actions against the perpetrations the United States has historically committed—even continues to commit—how do colonial and former colonial subjects of the United States take the "impetus for action" that Campbell discusses? Because it is difficult for members of wronged groups to lay claim to historical justice with the United States, especially for those who have been subject to U.S. imperialism, I believe that diasporic activists—in this case, Filipino American activists—play an integral role to claiming restitution. Although the United States has occupied or annexed several nations, such as the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, I aim to tackle the question of rectifying legacies of U.S. empire in the Philippines in this paper through the lens of Filipino American activist history. Therefore, I will contribute to existing historiography in a two-fold approach, incorporating historical narrative of Filipino American studies by introducing little-discussed Filipino activism—ranging from the 1970s to recent history—and to the realm of historical justice work through my extrapolations from those histories.

The activists I present are part of the Philippine National Democratic Movement (NDM)—led by left-wing, progressive activists and organizations that seeks genuine Philippine national liberation from foreign imperialist powers[4] and strengthen the national democratic rights of Philippines citizens. The NDM largely developed from the reemergence of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the later 1960s. Although Filipinos have fought imperialist powers for centuries, in terms of American empire, my interest in national democratic activism comes from the way NDM followers perceive the post-1946 era of independence in the

[3] *Ibid*, 967.

[4] The NDM believes that the Philippines was not truly liberated in 1946, the year the United States granted the country formal independence.

Philippines—which is that the Philippines never truly *received* independence. The NDM is worth examination then, because it challenges the notion that U.S. imperialism in the Philippines ended in 1946, creates more nuance in how we consider the United States in its international relationships, and may bring forth accountability for U.S. imperialist operations.

The groups I will examine show that the continued presence of U.S. imperialism has enabled the exploitation of the majority of the Filipino people by foreign, multinational capitalist endeavors, domestic feudal landlords, and the bureaucrat capitalists of the Philippine state. NDM activists believe that the Philippines suffers to this triad of problems because of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial aspect of the country. Because the NDM view is one that sees U.S. imperialism as presently active—not just a ghost of the past—and that current imperialist action will only continue to control the future, the past, present, and future overlap greatly for these activists and in this paper when I consider redress. Because the NDM maintains that the past will continue to determine the present and future of the Philippines, I believe that reckoning with the past will help mediate the current and future relationship between the United States and Philippines in the way the NDM seeks.

Although national democratic activists organize both in the Philippines and abroad in placed like the U.S., in this paper I will specifically examine two U.S. groups: the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) of the 1970s and 1980s and Anakbayan of the late 1990s and into the 21st century. Analyzing Filipino American national democratic activism specifically is essential, as I stated before, because these individuals' geopolitical presence in America is important for making the Philippine people's case of historical justice viable and visible to Americans. For individuals in the Philippines, it is difficult for them as people outside of American geopolitical bounds to make claims for historical injustices, whereas Filipino

Americans and many Filipino migrants in the United States have a stake in the American polity and in making the cause of the Philippines, in terms of national democratic demands, heard.

My project is an advocacy history in which I use the work of the NDM as a tool to propose how we might transform historical justice action and discourse, which are typically limited by having single-avenue approaches to historical rectification. Because my project is one that requires my interjection as a historian, throughout this essay I will take note of where the objective histories I outline conversate with my subjective goal. Historical justice typically implies that a perpetrating nation gives material or monetary reparations, official apologies, or other backward-looking ways of rectifying the past. But the Anakbayan members I spoke to in my oral histories argue that while a backward-looking approach will help the Philippines heal, it will mean nothing if there is no change in an imperialist country's forward-looking relationship and vision. In other words, even if the United States tries to make amends for past wrongdoings, it is equally—if not more—important for America to recognize that it is an empire and to move into the future acting against its imperialist tendencies.

Ultimately, I argue that a multifaceted, backward and forward dual strategy grounded in national democratic thought and action is the best way to spearhead the injustices wrought by decades of American empire. Not only will a multi-temporal perspective best-rectify U.S. imperialism, but I also believe that a historical justice project would benefit by adopting the protracted education, organization, and mobilization methods utilized by national democratic groups. Since historical justice often begins with victim activisms actionizing for redress, the justice I seek in many ways, *is* activism and should be modeled as such. I also stress the protracted element because empire is deep-seeded, complex, and must be combatted in an ongoing operation. Redress, in this case must then be a long-term, multi-dimensional effort.

To make my argument, I will first discuss historical justice theory, specifically with an imperialist perspective. In consulting secondary literature, I will illustrate why rectifying empire is difficult and how changing our perspective about redress can help us navigate those obstacles. Foregrounding this theory is important to keep in mind as I then explain imperialist and activist histories leading to my proposal at the end of the paper.

In section two, I offer a short brief on the history of how American empire evolved in the Philippines, from its role in the Filipino Revolution against the Spanish to the end of its formal role as a colonizer in 1946. Although historians have generally acknowledged U.S. colonialism in the Philippines, more generally, Americans have perceived this history, if at all, in terms of the "Little Brown Brother" trope—one of civilizing and benevolent assimilation. This section will briefly touch upon how American influence in the Philippines began and how the development of U.S. imperialism set the stage for U.S. neocolonialism after 1946.

Section three will discuss the birth of the NDM as recognized by the KDP, Anakbayan, and other national democratic groups. This section will touch upon the role that the CPP and its leader Jose Maria Sison played in launching the NDM's mission and ideology. Namely, I will look at the foundational text of the NDM, Sison's *Philippine Society and Revolution*, which is important for understanding the continuity of ideas, thought, and action of the CPP, the broader NDM the KDP, and Anakbayan throughout roughly 50 years of Philippine national democratic history. The importance of *PSR*—the popular way national democratic activists refer to the books—in the movement both in the Philippines and the United States will also set the stage for how the NDM has evolved into a transnational one that straddles between countries.

The fourth and fifth sections of this paper will be case studies of the KDP and Anakbayan, respectively. I will examine the national democratic ideologies, demands, and

actions of the organizations through primary source analysis of each group's documents, publications and presentations, oral histories of Anakbayan members, and discourse initiated through other historians and academics. The third section will discuss the rise and fall of the KDP in terms of the rise and fall of the CPP and NDM in the Philippines, while the fourth section will show the revitalization of the movement through groups like Anakbayan. I will speculate on and extrapolate from the histories of these groups key ideas and actions that propel convincing strategies for creating a multiple-angled approach to rectifying American imperialism in the Philippines.

Finally, in the last section of this paper I will bring the histories of the NDM in conversation with the theory I offer in section one, using the activist histories as a tool to craft and implement a historical justice project for U.S. empire. My suggestions will come from both the direct demands these activists have called for in their work and from my own interpretations of what national democratic activists value and how those interpretations fit into methods of redress. I also stress the term "begin discussion" because these activists, although leading the anti-imperialist effort throughout a large part of Filipino American history, are rather leftist, following a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective—one that not all Filipino American and Philippine citizens necessarily agree with. My suggestions for bringing historical justice against American imperialist endeavors and exploitation of the Philippines and its people are therefore limited, but I hope to begin discourse and speculation for how this relationship between the Philippines and United States may be recognized and reconciled. Although I acknowledge that other countries, such as Spain and Japan, also have imperialist histories in the Philippines, I also want to stress that this project will not touch heavily upon those histories, since the groups I look at are most interested in tackling U.S. empire.

I. A Brief Introduction to Historical Justice and Redress

Before I present the histories of U.S. empire in the Philippines and of the KDP and Anakbayan, I will first introduce historical discourse about redress, specifically in terms of imperialism. As I will later show, the persistence of national democratic, anti-imperialist activism by Filipinos both in the Philippines and United States not only shows that Filipinos still have strong feelings about the legacies of U.S. empire, but that the effects of empire are quite present in the Philippines today. Over the past 120 years, U.S. imperialism has held explicit, implicit, and systemic consequences in the Philippines, making it both a complicated history and dire to address. In this section, I will set the groundwork of redress theory so that as I move through the imperialist and activist histories next, I can bridge theory and histories to inform my proposal for a historical justice method in the final section of this paper.

First, I will introduce historical redress and why generally rectifying past perpetrations is simultaneously valuable and complicated. In Richard Vernon's *Historical Redress: must we pay for the past?* he explains that there are three distinguishing forms of redress: restitution, compensation, and apology. Restitution "means the very thing that was taken is actually returned;" compensation "means that some equivalent of whatever it was that was taken is given to the person or group that lost it;" and apology "is an expression of regret that redresses wrongdoing … [and] aims to restore the victims' dignity by erasing the view that their loss was justifiable."[5] Vernon's summary and the various modes of rectifying historical injustices show that there are various methods and angles in approaching redress, from material transfer of resources to more symbolic forms of remedying dark histories, such as a establishing truth commissions, implementing revised histories in schools, or issuing official apologies. Vernon

[5] Richard Vernon. *Historical Redress: must we pay for the past?* (London: Continuum, 2012): 7.

and other scholars debate that each form has its own benefits. However, there is no one model that has been successful in healing all areas of wrongdoing—especially because each perpetration and victim to these injustices carry their own unique circumstances and consequences, including but not limited to genocide, slavery, the displacement of indigenous peoples, and—the main focus of this paper—imperialism and its consequent exploitations. In terms of empire, therefore, it is not only difficult to even *justify* the cause to redress imperialistic legacies—as I highlighted in the introduction—but the question of how to implement redress is, in itself, multitudinous and complicated.

With the ambiguous nature of historical justice and empire in mind, I will now further explain why U.S. imperialism in the Philippines is a particularly challenging history to grapple with. Although national democratic activists argue that America's relationship with the Philippines was and greatly remains an overwhelmingly exploitative one, some argue that empire is still nuanced in the way it benefits or disenfrancizes an imperialized group. This is an issue that complicates the case for modern-day redress in the context of postcolonialism: "Does historic colonialism continue to cause harm to persons living in the present—and if so, how much?"[6] This question is framed in what Daniel Butt calls "*net effects* of colonialism," which "asks whether particular former colonies might now be better off than they would have been had colonialism not taken place—or, at least, if there might now be *some* sense in which they have benefited."[7] However, the question of deservedness for historical redress must not be measured in terms of net benefit or abuse. Would one consider some benefits to compensate for an ongoing, overwhelming, and systemic legacy of exploitation? These complex questions and

[6] Daniel Butt, 233.

[7] *Ibid*, 234.

rhetoric contribute to why there has not been a lot of work by both academics and colonized countries for suggesting and implementing redress methods to address empire.

In the history of American empire in the Philippines, the element of "net effects" certainly resonates with "benevolent assimilation" ideas that the United States brought infrastructures like modernized education systems and fulfilling the role of the global bearer of democracy to their "little brown brothers"—tropes that perpetuate the idea that America is a world leader in promoting freedom and modernization. Although imperialism is defined as the "tendency to strive for control of other countries of regions as colonies or dependencies," driven by economic interests through overseas market expansion, while also promoting "a genuine belief in the superiority of Western culture,"[8] Americans largely reject the United States' role as a Western imperialist nation.

When the United States received the Philippines as a territory from the Spanish it defined its imperialist mission as one of obligation, while in reality it was implemented as one of economic exploitations and an opportunity to geographically position American political presence in Southeast Asia, which I will touch upon in the next section. Even if the U.S. recognized its exploitation of Philippine resources and labor, it could, according to this rhetoric, justify its imperialist relationship by uplifting Filipinos through institutionalizing American education systems and granting employment and further education opportunities abroad in America. However, it is not as easy to pinpoint a clear beneficiary or quantitative way of measuring benefits in the net terms that Butt describes—especially given the layers of imperialist and neocolonial exploitation that Filipino national democratic activists have work to make known to the Philippine and American publics.

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[8] Christopher Riches and Jan Palmowski. "Imperialism." In *A Dictionary of Contemporary World History*. 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Web.

Vernon further challenges the debate about who benefits from imperial relationships, arguing that benefits should not be focus for justifying redress. He writes, "The *harm* done by both slavery and colonialism is both immense and undeniable. … The *benefits* received (and retained) from colonialism and slavery are very much harder to establish clearly."[9] The benefits imperialist powers received from the people and lands they abused are more definite and clear than any of former colonial nations, if they had at all received benefits.[10]

Because of the nuance in measuring gains, the "net effect" model of gauging the beneficiaries of imperialism is not the method that should determine whether the United States should address its history of empire. Although the benefits from imperialized people are ambivalent, we must take into account how imperialism extracts and affects Philippine resources, labor, and ongoing way of life. U.S. imperialism, as I and the activists I will present indicate, has created infrastructures and systems of long-term benefits for the United States. As I will continue to illustrate how the United States has had a clear upper-hand in its relationship with the Philippines and how Filipinos both in the Philippines and the United States have suffered because of long-term exploitation from American government operations and multinational capitalist pursuits, there is a need for historical justice, and its justification should be based on factors beyond the net benefits model.

If we should not look at imperialist histories in terms of net benefits, then we must reframe the justifying question of why those histories must be rectified. Based on my research, I argue that it would be best to reframe the question of "why redress imperialist legacies" through what Butt calls a "double counterfactual" lens. Rather than asking if imperialism did not happen,

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[9] Richard Vernon, 45.

[10] In the case of KDP and Anakbayan's stances, the benefits from U.S. empire are overwhelmingly absent. The argument about benefits is to make a case against individuals who argue that colonialism brought benefits.

the doubly counterfactual claim challenges us to imagine "a way in which [imperialism] could have come through non-dominated cooperation."[11] We can hold the United States accountable by turning away from the question of where net benefits lie and instead approach history with the lens of how imperialist relationships could have been reframed in more egalitarian, nonexploitative manners. This reimagines how one redresses imperialistic legacies with a framework that centers on the question: What if imperialism occurred in a non-dominated way that recognizes each country's national sovereignty? For the case of the Philippines—which has faced a great deal of domestic corruption and systemic problems, as I will later explain, namely through its elite land-owning classes and "bureaucrat capitalist" officials—the doubly counterfactual lens erases the idea that the conditions the Philippines have faced *just* stem from its internal corrupt leaders and policies.

I believe the doubly counterfactual perspective is aligned with those of the KDP and Anakbayan national democratic activists I will present. The lessons in their educational models and their actions point to their desire to reshape the Philippines to reach that end in making it a truly sovereign nation. Since the NDM strives for national sovereignty largely through dissolving the asymmetric, exploitative relationship the United States has maintained with the Philippines, we can use the double counterfactual theory to consider what American presence has manifested in throughout U.S.-Philippine history. It provides a framework that allows us to keep the United States accountable for the ways in which it has previously and continues to carry itself as an empire in the Philippines and in the greater world.

[11] Daniel Butt, 236.

II. Historical Background on American Empire in the Philippines

Now that I have set the groundwork for how we can justify a demand to redress U.S. empire in the Philippines, in this section I will discuss that very imperialist history and its consequences. This is important to contextualize not just to keep the United States accountable for imperializing the Philippines, but to better understand the broader anti-imperialist, national democratic missions of the KDP and Anakbayan. To stay consistent with the theme of Filipino activism, I will largely frame this historical background section through the lenses of anti-imperialist efforts from the beginning of U.S. empire to about the time that the Philippines gained formal independence. This framework will not only shed light on the history of American empire in the Philippines, but it will also help link the continuity of activism from the beginning of American encroachment up until the post-independence era of the NDM.

The United States largely entered Philippine history at a pivotal and volatile moment: the Philippine Revolution of 1896-1898 against the Spanish. Jose Rizal was the initial leader of the Revolution, and he is regarded by many Philippine and Filipino American activists today as the national hero of the Philippines. Rizal's writing leading to the Revolution strongly critiqued Spanish colonialism. He was consequently exiled for his work, which in turn catalyzed middle-class leaders to take more radical measures against the Spanish; an underground anti-colonial association known as the *Katipunan* formed in July 1892 under the leadership of Andres Bonifacio, a poor man from Tondo. In August 1896, Bonifacio and the *Katipunan*[12] initiated the Revolution, openly attacking the Spanish in San Juan, Metro Manila.[13] The Spanish arrested about 500 *Katipuneros* and suspected supporters, and Governor-General Ramon Blanco declared

[12] There were 400,000 in the *Katipunan* by 1896, although not all participated in the August uprising.

[13] Leonard Davis. *Revolutionary Struggle in the Philippines*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989): 27.

a state of war in the colony, resulting in the execution of the arrested, including Rizal.[14] Rizal and Bonifacio represent the ideal revolutionaries of the past, in the eyes of national democratic activists of the 1970s and beyond. Even in the KDP's name—the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino—the legacy of the *Katipunan* survived literally and symbolically in the NDM to complete the revolution that Rizal and Bonifacio largely started.

By March 1897, however, the *ilustrados*, or intelligentsia class of the Philippines, had begun participation in the revolution and initiated the Tejeros Convention in Cavite. It was led by Emilio Aguinaldo, the former mayor of Kawit, Cavite, who challenged Bonifacio for leadership of the revolution. Although Aguinaldo won, Bonifacio repudiated the convention's decision and refused to accept Aguinaldo's leadership. Aguinaldo called for Bonifacio's arrest, and on May 10, 1897, Bonifacio and his brother Procopio were executed.[15]

The revolution began to fall back to the Spanish, however, under the illustrados—a critique that national democratic activists have taken to heart and has largely grounded their movement as socialist and out of the hands of the powerful. Losses culminated to the December 1897 Pact of Biak-na-Bato, which forced Aguinaldo to surrender and seek exile in Hong Kong.[16] During Aguinaldo's exile, Philippine revolutionary forces steadily gained control on the islands while the American consul-general of Singapore, E. Spencer Pratt, contacted and met with Aguinaldo to inform him that the U.S. had initiated war with Spain, encouraging Aguinaldo to cooperate with Americans to fight Spain in the Philippines. When Aguinaldo asked Pratt about the Philippines' ability to maintain sovereign and independent rights after the war, Pratt said and

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[14] *Ibid*, 28.

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] *Ibid*.

later wrote down at Aguinaldo's request: "You need not have any worry about America. The American Congress and President have just made a solemn declaration disclaiming any desire to possess Cuba and promising to leave the country to the Cubans after having driven away the Spaniards and pacified the country. As in Cuba, so in the Philippines."[17]

Despite Pratt's promise, U.S. Congress maintained a mission of expansionism. Indiana Senator Albert J. Beveridge gave a speech on April 27, 1898 highlighting America's push for manifest destiny abroad: "Fate has written our policy for us; the trade of the world must and shall be ours. … American law, American order, American civilization, and the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted, by those agencies of God henceforth made beautiful and bright."[18] However, Aguinaldo proceeded to an agreement with Pratt, arranging to help the Americans combat Spain and returned to the Philippines to pursue the last push of the revolution in Luzon, culminating to the destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay May 1, 1988. Aguinaldo returned to Manila May 19, and in June, Filipino forces had regained nearly all of Luzon, with the last of the Spanish troops left in Manila.

Aguinaldo drafted the Kawit proclamation—which became the Philippine Declaration of Independence in its final iteration—June 12, 1898. However, Spanish and American officials ignored the declaration and proceeded in discussions that culminated to the December 10, 1898 Treaty of Paris. Under the treaty, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States in exchange for $20 million. The transition of colonial authority from Spain to the United States is a moment that national democratic activists strongly critique. Many see elite leaders like "Aguinaldo who

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[17] E. Spenser Pratt in Leon Wolff, *Little Brown Brother: How the United States Purchased and Pacified the Philippine Islands at the Century's Turn*, (New York: History Book Club, (1961) 2006): 48.

[18] Albert J. Beveridge in Frederick Merk, Lois Bannister Merk, and John Mack Faragher, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995): 232.

basically sold us [Filipinos] off to the United States"[19] in parallel with corrupt, elite Filipinos who occupy positions the top bureaucratic levels of Philippine society in the post-independence era. That is, they see both Aguinaldo and elite Filipinos as traitors to the Philippine people, as "sellout capitalists" to U.S. imperialist institutions.

Within days of U.S. acquisition of the Philippines as a territory, President William McKinley issued his "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation" December 21, 1898. The proclamation was a betrayal of promise to Philippine independence and the beginning of the "Little Brown Brother" trope of U.S. supremacy, aiming to assimilate Filipinos into the United States' economic, political, and cultural institutions by forcing local governments to pledge allegiance to the United States. The proclamation also made taxes and duties payable to American authorities and converted all ports under the possession of the United States for American-controlled trade.[20] These initial policies set the foreground for decades of asymmetric U.S. economic leverage in the Philippines, and advocates of the NDM argue they affected the Philippine economy after independence in 1946.

Filipino revolutionaries responded with pushback against American expansionism, however, leading to the Filipino-American War in 1899, during which American troops committed water torture, burned and looted villages, and massacred men, women, and children. At this point, Filipino troops converted to guerilla style warfare—a style of fighting later utilized in the 1970s and beyond by the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the NDM—but by the war's end in 1902,[21] the Americans prevailed in maintaining governmental dominance.

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[19] Gian Parel. Interview by Melissa Harris. Personal Interview. Jersey City, January 20, 2018.

[20] United States. Executive Branch. White House. Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation. By William McKinley. Washington, D.C., December 21, 1898.

[21] The war technically ended in 1902, but some activists argued the fighting in the war continued until as late as 191

The war came with costs, however, especially for the Philippines people: Over 4,200 American and 20,000 Filipino combatants died, and an additional estimate of 200,000 Filipino civilians died from disease, famine, and violence.[22]

During and after the Filipino-American War, President Theodore Roosevelt also issued an executive order in 1901 establishing the first American military base in the country, allotting 2,800 hectares at Subic Bay to become a military reservation of the U.S. navy. In 1903, the U.S. government also established a 3420-hectare military reservation, Fort Stotsenburg, for its cavalry in Pampanga. The fort was expanded in 1918 to accommodate Clark Airfield.[23] These bases remained in operation until 1991 when the Philippine Senate rejected their renewal, largely because of pressure from national democratic activists. Between 1901 and 1991, however, America continued to develop and increase its number of bases in the Philippines through a series of military base agreements. The encroachment of the U.S. military, other than through base operations, is a problem that Anakbayan activists continued fighting in the 21st century too.

U.S. economic interests and stake in Asia had also been on the rise around the turn of the 20th century, making the establishment of U.S. dominion in the Philippines more attractive to American businesses. NDM activists believe in the Leninist view that American capitalist overreach culminated into imperialist economic pursuit; the roots of this began in the early 20th century and continues today, the KDP and Anakbayan argue. Rick Baldoz writes that "U.S. trade with Asia had been on a rapid upward trajectory, growing from $5.7 million in 1870 to nearly $45 million in 1898," therefore making pro-imperialists view "the Philippines as a potential boon to American business interests as well as a strategic vantage point from which they could launch

[22] "The Philippine-American War, 1899–1902." U.S. Department of State. Accessed February 2, 2018. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/war.

[23] Leonard Davis, 92.

their economic and geopolitical ambitions on a global scale."[24] Starting in 1909, U.S. Congress began to pass acts that enabled U.S. goods to enter duty-free and removed all restrictions on export of Philippine raw material to America, significantly increasing U.S. business control of the Philippine economy.[25] American corporations capitalized on Philippines mineral and agricultural resources, such as sugar, coconut, and hemp, while also using the country as a stepping stone to access the Asian trade market. The early exploitative trade relationship the U.S. established with the Philippines not only gave American industries the opportunity "to expand their consumer base by forcing the millions of Filipinos who lived on the islands to purchase goods manufactured in the United States," but it also contributed "to the underdevelopment of the Philippine labor market in the decades following American rule,"[26] which is reasoning that national democratic activists in the United States cite as a long-term consequence of American empire after 1946.

The establishment of American institutional structures in local politics, economics, and public schools, in addition to the usage of American English as the official language for administration and education in the Philippines, helped mediate the "Americanization" that further indoctrinated Philippine society to accept American rule and superiority. With American school systems, "Filipinos began learning not only a new language but a new culture. They were taught to look up to American heroes, to regard American culture as superior to their own and

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[24] Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898–1946*, (New York: New York University Press, 2011): 25.

[25] Since the 1898 Treaty of Paris granted Spain a 10-year period to conduct free trade on the same terms of America in terms of ships and goods, the U.S. began to intensify its asymmetric economic and trading laws soon after that window of time closed. The trade acts mentioned here are the 1909 Payne-Alrich Act and the 1913 Underwood Tariff Act. In 1900, the United State share in the total value of the import and export of trade was only 11 percent, but by 1920 and 1935, those numbers increased to 65 and 72 percent, respectively.

[26] Anthony Christian Ocampo, *The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016): 21-22.

American society as the model for Philippine society. Philippine history was either ignored or distorted."[27] The reinforcement of American values through education and cultural control, coupled with the import of consumer goods to the Philippines from the U.S., acted as a positive feedback loop for furthering American dominance—culturally, economically, and politically. The American manipulation of Filipino educational system persisted throughout the 20th and into the 21st century, English is still a leading language used to teach in classes, and schools that specifically prepare Filipinos to work abroad in places like America exist today. [28] Educational reform is a large campaign that both KDP and Anakbayan tackled, and they believe that the intentional structures of education over time have only helped enable U.S. imperialist operations by preparing Filipinos to work for U.S. capitalistic pursuits—whether in the Philippines or in America.[29]

The American educational groundwork in the early 20th century also sowed belief of the American Dream and U.S. exceptionalism, which in turn encouraged many Filipinos—both students and workers—to make their way to America, hoping to improve their quality of life.[30] Since Filipinos had colonial subject status, they could also enter the U.S. as "nationals" rather than as foreigners. However, this status also prevented Filipinos in America from receiving full citizenship rights and protections, making them easily exploitable as a cheap labor source for Americans in the face of nationalist immigration policy in the 1920s that largely curtailed the migration of other foreign people. It is from this history that we start to see early Filipino

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[27] Leonard Davis: 35.

[28] Robyn Magalit Rodriguez. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2010): 5.

[29] "Take Back Our Education: People First, Not Profit and War," Anakbayan-USA, November 2016. (http://www.anakbayanusa.org/?portfolio=takebackoureducation/)

[30] Rick Baldoz, 47.

American activists, such as Carlos Bulosan, who experienced exploitation and poverty in the Philippines but came to America expecting promises of opportunity in the 1930s. Although Bulosan was not a national democratic activist, his experiences in both the Philippines and America made him realize that under the American colonial regime, the Philippines and its people were a tool and a well of resources for the United States to exploit and extract from.[31] Bulosan, like national democratic activists, was influenced by socialist and Marxist literature, but unlike KDP and Anakbayan activists, Bulosan and other Filipinos that had gone to America in the 1930s primarily fought for their place in American society instead of against American imperialism in the Philippines.

The general presence of Filipinos like Bulosan on the West coast as brown bodies in a nationalist and racially discriminatory era of American history contributed to the United States' passage of the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act, which would relinquish the Philippines as an American territory in 1946 and officially make Filipinos foreigners to America. The consequence of this is that immigration opportunities for Filipinos to the United States closed significantly, since the 1924 Immigration Act's quota system strictly curtailed the ability of foreign people of the Philippines—among other Asian, Latino, and African countries—from receiving visas or permanent immigration status.[32] Before 1934, Filipinos would have been exempt from the quota system, but after Tydings-McDuffie, Filipino immigration rates dropped significantly. It is not until 1965 when immigration policy liberalizes significantly that Filipinos reemerge as a significant demographic in the United States again. In section three I will discuss

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[31] Carlos Bulosan, "My Education," in E. San Juan, Jr., ed., *On Becoming Filipino: Selected Writings of Carlos Bulosan* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995): 125.

[32] The quota system established in 1924 gave a minimum, even average of, 100 visa allocations for normal immigration circumstances to most non-European countries, with Canada and Mexico excluded the conditions. The quota system was based on U.S. census demographics at the end of the 19th and very beginning of the 20th century; at that point, the U.S. population consisted largely of people from European descent.

this transition and what it means for the shift in character of the Filipino population in America—especially in terms of activism.

With the history of the imperialist exploitation of the Philippines in mind—from its people in the country and abroad to its resources and beyond—in the next section I will introduce Jose Maria Sison, the mastermind behind the ideologies of the NDM. He argues that 1946 was not the year the Philippines became sovereign; rather, he shows that U.S. imperialism continued under the guise of neocolonialism, and his writing ended up becoming foundational to a whole movement of anti-imperialist, national democratic activism.

III. *Philippine Society and Revolution*: Detailing American Neocolonialism and Setting the Groundwork for the National Democratic Movement (NDM)

The Filipino American activist organizations I will examine categorize their work and missions under what is known as the NDM, a platform that aims to fight for an egalitarian future for and the true national sovereignty of the Philippines, free from imperialist influences of every kind.[33] The national democratic angle that these organizations recognize is an important perspective in considering a historical justice project. Although the activism throughout the NDM has been very of-the-moment, not concerned with redressing the past specifically, the way that the movement argues that the ghosts of empire persist strongly in the present shows that redressing imperialism must be conducted through various approaches and considered in a multi-temporal manner.

The NDM originates from the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist analyses of leftist Philippine leaders—most notably Communist Party of the Philippines leader Jose Maria Sison. Sison and other youth leftist revolutionaries in a group called Kabataang Makabayan (KM, the Nationalist Youth) separated from the precursor organization of the CPP, the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) in 1967. The separatists convened as the CPP in 1968 and especially gained traction with the First Quarter Storm that followed in resistance to Ferdinand Marcos' 1970 reelection. Sison led the CPP and developed the national-democratic mission of its revolution in his 1970 book *Philippine Society and Revolution* (*PSR*). *PSR* is the primary literary text that has not only defined the NDM in the Philippines since 1970, but it has also been the integral, foundational text that informed the anti-imperialist missions and foundings of the KDP and Anakbayan—

[33] Although I primarily focus on *American* anti-imperialism in this paper—the type of imperialism that the groups in this study are focused on as well—the NDM Movement is broadly anti-imperialist, whether anti-Japanese, anti-Soviet, anti-Chinese, etc.

which were notably established after the publishing of Sison's book in 1970—among other national democratic Filipino American organizations.

Although Sison—who was and remains the key leader and informer of the NDM—was raised in a family that came from the very landowning class in the Philippines that he later criticized, his interactions with lower-middle class Filipinos in early public schooling and his peer's accounts of land disenfranchisement from Sison's family made him sympathetic to peasant revolts led by the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan—otherwise known as the Huks or People's Liberation Army—in the 1940s and 1950s. Sison was also influenced by other national liberation movements—many which were informed by nationalist and Marxist, Leninist, and/or Maoist thought—in Africa, Latin America, and other parts of Asia in the 1960s and 1970s as Sison became a student activist.[34] Philippine uprisings and socialist thought easily set the stage for Sison to develop a plan for the Philippines' own national democratic agenda, highlighted in *PSR*, to fit with the ideology and actions that other movements abroad adopted and implemented.

PSR highlights the history and consequences of imperialism in the Philippines, especially from the American era, but also including Spanish and Japanese eras. Sison extrapolates from this history the "three basic problems" he uses to explain the oppressive status of Philippine society in the 1970s: imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. He writes that these problems manifest and are sustained in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal post-independence state of the Philippines, arguing that despite receiving formal independence, imperialist powers—namely American—still maintain an exploitative stronghold over Philippine society.

Sison argues that the semi-colonial character of Philippine society is one of U.S. neocolonialism, a persistence of asymmetric American influence over the Philippines, even after

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[34] Jose Maria Sison and Rainer Werning. *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View*. (New York: Taylor & Francis Inc., 1989): 27.

its formal independence in 1946. Sison writes that "U.S. imperialism made sure that it would continue to control the economy, politics, culture, military and foreign relations. It has extorted unequal treaties and privileges that transgress the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and national patrimony of the Filipino people."[35] As the U.S. transitioned to grant formal independence to the Philippines, the American government, the first president after 1946, Philippine President Manuel Roxas, and his administration passed a series of treaties and agreements that contributed to sustained American influence and presence in the Philippines. Despite realizing independence, Roxas cited his reverence for America in his inauguration speech, which he called "our mother, our liberator, and now our benefactor"[36]—and his stated intentions to maintain the Philippines' relationship with the U.S. strongly foreshadowed the continuation of American dominion in the Philippines—certainly through the policies like the Property Act (1946), Bell Trade Act (1946), the U.S.-R.P. Military Bases Treaty (1947), and the U.S. Military Assistance Pact (1947), which allowed many of the asymmetric economic and military policies established by the United States that I highlighted in section two to persist in the post-independence era.[37]

The willingness of the Philippine government to cooperate with the U.S., according to Sison and the activists of the NDM, is where the semi-feudal analysis of Philippine society emerges. Sison argues that this imperialist relationship reinforces the centuries-long feudal nature that Spain incorporated into Philippine society and that since the beginning of the 20th century, the domestic feudal characteristic of the Philippines has reshaped to cater to and provide

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[35] Amado Guerrero. *Philippine Society and Revolution*. (Revolutionary School of Mao Tsetung Thought, 1970): 39. Amado Guerrero is a pseudonym for Jose Maria Sison.

[36] Manuel Roxas. "Inaugural Speech of His Excellency Manuel Roxas As President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines." Address, Inaugural Address of President Roxas, Legislative Building, Manila, May 28, 1946.

[37] Amado Guerrero, 22.

surplus for American capitalistic extraction of raw materials and resources, consequently stunting the Philippines in its ability to build its own national industries: "U.S. monopoly capital has assimilated the seed of capitalism that is within the womb of domestic feudalism but at the same time it has prevented the full growth of this seed into a national capitalism."[38]

Sison writes that the asymmetrical relationship between landlords and peasants—who he says comprises a fraction of 1 percent and 75 percent, respectively, of Filipino society—allows the land-owning class to charge high land rent from the peasants who occupy their land, with land rent as high as 50-80 percent of crop yield, and to impose wage slavery upon farm workers.[39] The disparity in power among Filipinos is notable, since it shows that national democratic activists also place agency on Filipinos exploiting its own people; this is not just a dichotomy between imperialized Filipinos and imperialist Americans, but rather a web of complicated power dynamics between Americans and Filipinos, as well as among Filipinos. However, the collaborative endorsement that imperialist powers have with elite Filipinos doubles down on the oppression and exploitations the Philippine people have encountered. This perspective makes a case for the doubly counterfactual framework from section one and how failing to reckon with, and therefore subsequently dismantle, imperialist origins has enabled U.S. empire to linger and continue well beyond 1946.

An example of the partnership between elite Filipinos and U.S. imperialist players is in how both big Philippine planters or landowners and U.S. agrobusinesses both benefit from the maintenance of a feudal system. Sison names some businesses, such as the Rockefeller group's Esso Standard Fertilizer and Agricultural Chemical plant, which "can directly determine the

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[38] *Ibid*, 53.

[39] *Ibid*, 63.

price of all agricultural commodities by its control of fertilizers, pesticides and all chemicals for agricultural use."[40] Other American-owned export plantations that dominated in the Philippines in the 1970s also included Del Monte and its 56,000-acrew pineapple plantation on the southern island of Mindanao, as well as Massey-Ferguson, which owned 12,000 acres to grow corn.[41]

While I have outlined the semi-colonial and semi-feudal elements of Philippine society according to Sison so far, the two are bolstered by the third problem Sison highlights: bureaucrat capitalism. Bureaucrat capitalists, in this sense, are categorized as corrupt government officials and big corporate heads—or, as Sison more explicitly calls them, the "comprador big bourgeoisie." Sison also cites big landlords as also overlapping into this class. In *PSR*, Sison argues the comprador bourgeoisie leaders of the American colonial era—like Emilio Aguinaldo, who national democratic leaders and activists say enabled U.S. dominion after the Philippine Revolution—became the bureaucrat capitalist "puppets" of the U.S. after independence: "They are capitalists by keeping the entire government as a large private enterprise from which they draw enormous private profits. They act like the local managers of U.S. monopolies. … Through their political parties, the bureaucrat capitalists try to give the masses the false illusion of democratic choice."[42]

Bureaucrat capitalism and U.S. imperialism intersect through Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), a strategy that manipulates the infrastructure of foreign countries so that surrogate officials and institutions—which, in terms of the Philippines and Sison's argument, manifest largely in bureaucrat capitalists—will uphold U.S. interests and policy. [43] The military base

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[40] *Ibid*, 66-67.

[41] Stephen Rosskamm Shalom and Daniel B. Schirmer, eds. *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance*. (Boston: South end Press, 1987): 296.

[42] Amado Guerrero, 69.

agreements that the U.S. and Philippine governments established after independence, for instance, not only allowed for U.S. military presence to continue in the Philippines, but also provided the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFR) with training and weaponry. The Philippine government uses the AFR for counter-insurgency efforts, combatting political dissent and maintaining the status quo of Philippine society—especially with the implementation of martial law by Marcos in 1972.

In exchange for supporting imperialist and feudal endeavors, bureaucrat capitalists, according to Sison, receive political support from foreign imperialists and people of the elite classes in the Philippines. This allows the bureaucrat capitalists to maintain their own political interests while also accumulating capital through bribery and the manipulation of governmental institutions. This pattern emerges throughout history, especially in the U.S. government's collaboration with Marcos and in President Donald Trump's open support for President Rodrigo Duterte more recently. The reemergence of this pattern not only shows that despite activist efforts to reform their own country, the cycling endorsements of U.S. officials and offices requires the United States' to rectify its legacy of imperialist operations.

In light of the problems of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism, the solution that Sison and the NDM envision is realized through armed revolution, a "protracted people's war" of historically oppressed Philippine masses—namely peasants and the proletariat. In *PSR*, Sison envisions in a very Maoist sense that the peasants and proletariat, otherwise known as "the masses" would gather as the core of a communist army. The movement's belief is that once inequities created by American influence are uprooted from the Philippines, the "puppet state" of the Filipino government will lose its military, economic, and social leverage against the people.

[43] Leonard Davis, 11.

PSR is the formative, central text for national democratic activists, and it outlines the consequent direction of the revolution once the U.S. is—albeit, in a utopian sense—removed from supporting the elite capitalists and governmental officials of the Philippines. Sison envisions the revolution to occur in two stages: the people's democratic revolution and the socialist revolution. He writes that the CPP's NPA will lead the first stage by establishing revolutionary bases and guerilla zones in the countryside, build their coalition there, and proceed to encircle and seize the cities: "The New People's Army shall advance wave upon wave over a protracted period of time to destroy the enemy of the whole country."[44]

After the first stage of the state's overhaul, Sison aims to establish a socialist "new democratic republic" led by the proletariat. This state would "confiscate the property of the imperialists, the exploiting classes and traitors to benefit the proletarian and semiproletarian masses. The state shall run all nationalized enterprises and all sources of raw material and power,"[45] creating cooperative enterprises among owner-cultivators and other producers. In maintaining this system, Sison believes the revolution will continue to fight imperialist powers from encroaching upon his realized utopian state by ensuring its sovereignty is maintained. The new Philippine state would "open and maintain diplomatic and trade relations with all countries which respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Filipino people and which engage in such relations for mutual benefit. … All unequal treaties and arrangements with the international bourgeoisie led by U.S, imperialism must be immediately abrogated."[46] The stress on

[44] Amado Guerrero, 97.

[45] *Ibid*, 97-98.

[46] *Ibid*, 99.

sovereignty and equal international standing is key, given the theory I presented in section one, and it shows that national democratic and redress theories can go hand-in-hand.

From his plan, Sison came to develop the guidelines of the general program of what he calls "the national democratic revolution of a new type."[47] This guidelines become readapted throughout the history of the NDM, even to today, which illustrates that even decades after the initial publishing of *PSR*, the protracted plan of Sison's revolutionary agenda still sustained. The fact that the NDM sees the fight against imperialist as a long-term, protracted battle is an element I will incorporate in my redress strategy later in this paper; after all, to truly compensate for 120 years of explicit, implicit, and systemic perpetrations and consequences from imperialism, the methodology would have to be just as intricate, therefore calling for a multifaceted approach.

Although *Philippine Society and Revolution* also does not specifically detail how the NDM will sustain in the long term, its analysis of the relation between imperialism and domestic national corruption in the Philippines is one that Philippine and Filipino American national democratic organizations that have emerged and function independently from the CPP and NPA have adopted. As I move into the following sections concerning the KDP and Anakbayan, the themes, ideology, and language in *PSR* reemerge both explicitly and implicitly in their missions and actions—all of which I will consider in my final analysis for historical justice after.

[47] See Appendix 2.

IV. The Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP): The National Democratic Movement Finds its Bearings in America

The first national democratic organization I will examine is the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino. This group introduced anti-imperialist activism to the United States during a new wave of 1970s immigration patterns and key events occurring in the Philippines, setting an early model for how we can consider historical justice through its work within America. The various fronts that the KDP combats illustrates the equally multiple layers of imperialist actions by the United States—especially during the Marcos era. The way that the KDP navigated its efforts are ones I believe are also useful in considering a pathway for redress in section six.

In section two, I discussed the closure of Filipino immigration to the United States because of the shift in immigration laws and how it played into the declaration of independence of the Philippines. However, in 1965 when Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson passed immigration reform known popularly as the Hart-Celler Act, which abolished the quota system and hugely liberalized immigration rules. Since the new immigration system introduced preference for family reunification and professional work recruitment, post-1965 Filipino America looked quite different than earlier Filipino generations in the United States. Anthony Ocampo writes that with American-style school systems producing skilled and culturally assimilated Filipinos in the Philippines, "they were primed and ready to migrate to the United States," and that although "earlier waves of Filipino immigrants were predominantly uneducated young men who went into agricultural work, the majority of Filipinos who arrived after 1965 came with their college degrees in hand and professional work experience to boot."[48] The

[48] Anthony Christian Ocampo, 28-29.

demographic shift is important in the NDM in the United States; since the movement in the Philippines centered on peasant struggles, the growing petty bourgeoise, professional-class face of Filipino America makes maintaining the same angle difficult in the United States. Future national democratic activists cite that this is a problem they grapple with in their organization efforts.[49]

While policy on the U.S. front created a pull factor for Philippine people to immigrate to America, conditions in the Philippines also primed push factors for its citizens to emigrate and work abroad. After independence, as Jose Maria Sison touched upon in *PSR*, the U.S. protected it economic interests in the Philippines by supporting the land-owning class, perpetuating feudalism in the country; as a result, "severe trade imbalances and economic crisis ensued through the 1950s. The Philippines' lack of technological development in agriculture as well as limited access to the once open U.S. market rendered it unable to successfully compete worldwide."[50] Although there was debate throughout the 1960s about whether to bolster an import-substitution industrial economy or to advocate for export-oriented industrialization, Marcos institutionalized labor export with Presidential Degree 442 to simultaneously capitalize on out-migration remittances and to quell the political unrest and upsurge in communist activity as he declared martial law in September 1972. Ultimately, however, Marcos "saw the export of labor as an important measure to curb the political unrest likely to be exacerbated by un- and underemployment."[51]

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[49] Gian Parel.

[50] Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, 11.

[51] *Ibid*, 12.

Not only did many KDP activists come from the Philippines under migrant laborer export policy, but those very activists also critiqued and saw U.S. imperialism as the root cause of it. American capitalist pursuits, they argue, crippled the Philippine economy, fueled political corruption, and therefore forced Filipinos to seek economic mobility abroad rather than in the Philippines. For instance, Velma Veloria, a member of the San Francisco KDP, said that in KDP discussion groups, she came to understand that "what pushed Filipino professionals to leave was the country's inability to provide living wages to its college graduates, and what pulled them to the United States were the job opportunities and historical, economic, and cultural ties" between the U.S. and Philippines, making America "appealing to Filipinos in search of a better life."[52]

Under the institutionalization of migrant labor export and the instatement of martial law, political dissidents like Sison and his followers in the KM were either forced underground or sent abroad into exile, especially in the United States Cynthia Maglaya, for example, was one of the student leaders of the who immigrated to the U.S. in 1970, between the liberalization of American immigration laws and the start of martial law. National democratic leaders in the Philippines gave individuals like Maglaya the responsibility of building support for the Philippine revolution in America: "She, along with other immigrants who came out of the NDM, brought the experience of the KM and CPP to share with their American-raised counterparts."[53] Once in American, Maglaya became one of the founding members of the KDP, a group Filipinos and Filipino Americans who established chapters throughout the United States and aimed to simultaneously fight for socialism and rights of Filipinos in America and for the NDM in the

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[52] Velma Veloria. "Different Roads Home." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 97.

[53] Helen C. Toribo "We Are Revolution: A Reflective History of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)." *Amerasia Journal* 24, no. 2 (1998): 160-61.

Philippines. As a young woman, student, and national democratic activist, Maglaya—although only one example of the many activists who immigrated to America—is representative of the shift in demographic representation of the Filipino American and Filipino American activist community in the face of both liberalized immigration policy in the U.S. and the political climate and crackdown on revolutionary groups in the Philippines. The combination of these two are key in understanding how individuals like Maglaya were able to help establish national democratic organizations in the U.S., such as the KDP, from the 1970s onward.

To reiterate, Maglaya was one of the founding members of the KDP; in 1971, two years before the KDP was formally founded, Maglaya and a small group of activists from the Philippines formed the Kalayaan collective in San Francisco and published a newspaper also titled *Kalayaan*. The newspaper supported antiracist and anti-imperialist missions in America and Philippines, respectively, calling for Filipinos Americans to support the national democratic revolution in the Philippines: "Many Filipinos in the United States were first introduced to the CPP, the NPA, and the national democratic cause through *Kalayaan*."[54] After Marcos declared martial law in 1972, Kalayaan activists and allies found it imperative to oppose the Marcos regime, coordinating with leftist radicals in the Philippines to establish an organized revolutionary movement in the U.S. to support the anti-Marcos effort.[55]

Roughly 70 Filipino activist leaders in America convened July 27-28, 1973 in Santa Cruz, California, for the KDP's Founding Congress, establishing a highly organized, centralized national structure, as well as a dual-line program: to advocate for national democracy in the

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[54] Rene Ciria Cruz. "Introduction: A Snapshot—The Life and Times of the KDP." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 8.
Cruz is a founding member of the KDP and was in its national leadership until the group dissolved in 1986. *Kalayaan* was also one of the KDP's news publications.

[55] *Ibid*, 9.

Philippines and to promote socialism in the United States. KDP member Estella Habal, who was one of the first elected to the KDP's National Council, wrote that "In the Philippine situation, a national democratic stage was needed before socialism. In the United States, minority peoples were part of the working class and believed that democratic rights must be extended to minorities first," leading the KDP to root its efforts in spreading socialist belief and practices in the United States too.[56]

The KDP Founding Congress documents also show organization's mission to carry out the incomplete anti-imperialist revolution of the original 1896 Katipunan: "In the same honored tradition of the first Katipunan, the new organization is committed to mobilizing the broadest number of Pilipino people in the United States to support and participate in struggle."[57] Unlike the first Katipunan in the Philippines, however, the KDP used the Maoist principles and language adopted in Sison's *PSR*: "Katipunan members are united in the understanding that imperialism is the moot cause for the poverty and misery of Pilipino people and other oppressed peoples throughout the world."[58] After the KDP was founded, the organization spread throughout the United States, with chapters emerging in "Guam, Honolulu, San Diego, Los Angles, San Francisco, Oakland/East Bay, Sacramento, San Jose, Seattle, Chicago, New York, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, plus national staff including the NED located in the San Francisco Bay Area," as well as three Canadian chapters in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.[59]

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[56] Estella Habal. "How I Became a Revolutionary (2007)." In *Voices of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Experience*, edited by Sang Chi and Emily Moberg Robinson, (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2012): 246-247.

[57] "Nation-Wide Organization Formed: Founding Congress of the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikon Pilipino." Kalayaan International. 1973.

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] Helen C. Toribo, 167.

The language the KDP founding members use in its statement after this first congress also points to its direct influence from the CPP and Sison, which shows the direct connectivity of the NDM in the Philippines with groups like the KDP in the United States. Aside from publishing pieces in the *Kalayaan*, *Ang Katipunan*, and *Katipunan* that progressed the efforts for national democracy, the KDP promoted the propaganda and mission that Sison details in *PSR* through Pandayan, a publishing institution that the KDP established to distribute writings and resources produced by the CPP, National Democratic Front, and anti-marital law organizations, including a combined republishing of Sison's *PSR* and *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War* in 1979.[60] The KDP's effort to disseminate information and thought largely produced in the Philippines not only shows how the transpacific nature of the NDM formed, but also how a focus on educating is dire to their cause. This is a trend I have seen throughout the NDM in my research and is one I consider valuable when considering historical justice later in section six, especially in considering strategies to transform historical tropes of America's global role in bearing and spreading egalitarianism and to help the American public acknowledge the United States as an imperialist power.

On the organizational front, the KDP was highly centralized, appointing its members to various committees and levels of organization, whether local or national. The tight program that the KDP ran was also effective in recruiting and organizing Filipinos and Filipino Americans. Its dual-line mission for rights in both the Philippines and U.S. helped the KDP attract "best-educated activists among recent immigrants and some of the most talented and dedicated activists of the American-born and the 1.5 generations (those who came to the United States at an early age," bridging individuals who came from differences of socioeconomic class and

[60] *Ibid*, 169.

cultural experiences.[61] On the anti-Marcos front, advocating for the ousting of the Philippine president, the KDP initiated and organized multiple mass actions against the Marcos administration while also lobbying the U.S. Congress successfully in temporarily cutting military aid to the Philippine government.[62] However, the dual-line program of the organization also allowed its members to also combat racial discrimination and job exploitation of Filipinos and other people of color in the U.S. Some examples of these campaigns include the KDP's opposition to business and governmental efforts to destroy San Francisco Manilatown's International Hotel, which provided inexpensive housing for retired Chinese and Filipino laborers and served as a meeting space for different Asian American revolutionary groups. KDP members also defended two Filipina nurses, Filipina Narciso and Leonora Perez, who were falsely implicated in several murder cases in a Michigan hospital on bases of sexism and racial discrimination.[63]

The themes in all these victories include fighting to reduce U.S. military presence in the Philippines, making Filipinos in America and Americans more generally aware of how the U.S. government and American transnational corporations enable corruption and exploitation in the Philippines, and protecting the rights of Filipinos, especially marginalized Filipinos, abroad. I take all of these themes into consideration when I argue the benefits of structuring a historical justice project modeled on educating, organizing, and mobilizing; the different layers of work the

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[61] Augusto F. Espiritu "Foreward." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): xiv.

[62] *Ibid*, xv.

[63] Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 156-157.

KDP did shows that multiple layers of work must go into rectifying the consequences of U.S. empire.

The KDP's multiple levels of work was notably effective in combating labor and resource exploitation simultaneously occurring in the Philippines and in the U.S. For instance, KDP member and *Kalayaan* writer Christine Araneta, who wrote under the alias Ma. Flor Sepulveda to protect herself from getting targeted by the Philippine or U.S. governments, published "US Imperialism, the Root Cause of the Central Luzon Floods," as her first story for *Kalayaan* in 1973. In the article, Araneta examines the severe 1972 flooding in central Luzon, investigating how foreign logging companies had contributed to the environmental and consequent communal disaster from the rain that year:

> Indiscriminate logging by lumber exporters and the slash-and-burn techniques of the *kaingneros* (mountainside slash-and-burn farmers) had magnified the damage. … And who did the loggers sell the famous Philippine hardwoods to? Foreign markets. And why did the *kaingineros* have to eke out a living on the mountainside? Because semifeudal landlordism made subsistence agriculture impossible on the plains … [t]his ecological disaster was tied up with imperialism because the once pristine forests were now bound up with and directed by international market forces.[64]

Araneta wrote this article in shortly after traveling to and supporting Filipino farm workers striking at Delano, California, grape farms. Although this second iteration of the Grape Boycott—with the first beginning in 1965—was organized under the United Farm Workers, Filipino laborers of the older generation, known as the *manongs*, were influential in unionizing and mobilizing farm workers as a collective to strike. Araneta indicates in her account that she considered the connection between farm worker and land

[64] Christine Araneta. "What's In A Name?" Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 50.

exploitation in the Philippines with that in America, touching upon issues of capitalistic imperialism in agribusinesses:

> Surveying the wide expanse of California countryside, the rolling hills, the spacious uninhabited lands, I pondered why the United States would venture beyond its borders to claim new territories, markets, and raw materials. There was such abundance right here. Why were peasants in the Philippines being driven off their lands to make way for US-owned export culture?[65]

Araneta's accounts show that a dual-line program made sense for KDP activists in fighting for Filipinos more generally. The accounts show how Filipinos were exploited because of mass capitalistic and imperialist multinational corporations, whether through land disenfranchisement in the Philippines or through labor exploitation in the U.S. The effects of imperialism, therefore, are felt by Filipinos both in the Philippines and in the United States, and I believe that when considering a project of historical redress, we must consider the accounts of Filipinos both in the country and abroad.

Another example of how Filipinos were deliberately exploited by American agribusinesses and the Philippine labor export economy of the post-independence era is in the story of KDP member Misael "Bo" Apostol. He was the sixth of 11 children of a poor farming family in the Philippines, and he came to the U.S. at the age of 17 when he was recruited to apply for the Philippine Training Agricultural Program (PTAP), which was organized by the 4-H program.[66] Although Apostol was promised agricultural training and education in the U.S. under this program, once he was accepted and arrived in San Francisco in 1979, he realized the training was a façade: "There was no training, no school, … only backbreaking work in the fields. I then

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[65] *Ibid*, 49-50.

[66] 4-H was a Philippine government-ran government program that aimed to train agricultural workers in the Philippines. A large component of this program was in sending Filipinos to the United States to give them training in American agricultural strategies, but it overall enabled worker exploitation.

realized with a sick heart that the 'training program' was a farce."[67] Apostol worked seven days a week, nearly 16 hours a day in the summer and in below-30-degree weather during the winter picking vegetables. Because he was in a training program, Apostol was not paid; rather, he received a monthly $100 stipend for food. Apostol wrote to the 4-H organization in the Philippines periodically, asking for it to not send anymore Filipinos to the U.S. under PTAP, but his complaints never brought responses or consequent action by the program.

Apostol later escaped the farm he worked on, but in doing so he became an undocumented immigrant. However, KDP activists—who were already aware of the widespread abuses of the 4-H program throughout California and began organizing to reform it in 1977—reached out to Apostol, attempting to relocate him with a 4-H coordinator while also encouraging him to join and attend KDP workshops. Apostol writes that he came to understand the political situation in the Philippines, that he had known Marcos declared martial law but did not know what it meant until the KDP educated him in the way that U.S.-Philippine relations had been entangled in imperialism and corruption, thus requiring systemic reform.[68] Meanwhile, the KDP aided in organizing community support for trainees like Apostol, pressuring agribusiness owners, the Philippine Embassy, the State Department, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to rectify the exploitative nature of the 4-H and PTAP programs.

Although the American government denied the trainees' allegations, the Philippine Embassy later acknowledged the validity of the complaints, leading to a discontinuation of the entire program.[69] Apostol's new awareness of the history of continuity of American imperialism

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[67] Bo Apostol. "Not the Usual Path." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 65.

[68] *Ibid*, 66-67.

[69] Helen C. Toribo, 173.

and its exploitation of Filipinos bodies shows the importance of education in creating accountability with the Filipino and American governments; this is a component of the NDM that I find integral to not only the KDP's mission, but also in the mission of making the United States acknowledge and subsequently rectify the largely invisible way in which its conducted imperialist and exploitative endeavors.

It is clear that the KDP condemned the abuses that occurred in contract labor abroad, and the activists pointed to Marcos not just as a militant dictator, but also as the enabler of this overseas economic norm. The KDP saw Marcos as a "puppet president" that would allow U.S. multinational businesses leech natural resources and bolster feudalism in the Philippines, while also exploiting Filipino labor abroad. In a KDP flyer, titled "Expose the Fake 'Independence' of the Marcos Regime," it reads that Marcos only outlawed any form of democratic protest, curtailed freedom of speech, and imprisoned more than 20,000 political dissidents. He also "further increased the rights of U.S. and other foreign corporations to plunder at will the wealth and resources of the Philippines and ruthlessly exploit Filipino workers," adding that the 55 percent inflation rate of the peso and frozen daily wage rates at 8 pesos—an equivalent to $1.12—has made poverty an ever-growing issue in the Philippines.[70] At the same time, the flyer argues, the United States developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the Marcos regime.

To maintain not just a grasp on the Philippine economy, but a strong military and intelligence operation in southeast Asian—something very crucial in the 1970s especially because of the Vietnam War—the U.S. government has provided "million and millions of dollars in military aid, arms credit and direct American training and supervision of the Marcos secret

[70] Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP) flyer criticizing U. S. imperialism and the Marcos Regime, June 12, 1975. Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino, 1975. From University of Washington, Special Collections, Silme Domingo Papers. Print. Accessed January 15, 2018.

police and military forces."[71] To reiterate, this led KDP activists to advocate against U.S. military base presence in the Philippines, as they saw military aid to the AFP as an enabler of martial law and intervening force in the effort to oust the president.

KDP activists stood against Marcos on-the-ground in protest, not just in written dissidence. Although Marcos' last official state visit was in 1966,[72] Marcos returned for the first time in 1979 since declaring martial law for the American National Publishers Association convention in Hawaii. The KDP National Executive Board sent members Rene Ciria Cruz, Jeanette Dandionco Lazam, and Sorcy and Bo Apostol to Hawaii to protest Marcos with a series of militant protests throughout Honolulu. They collaborated with other organizations, such as the Movement for a Free Philippines (MFP), the Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (CHRP), and Friends of the Filipino People (FFP).

Sorcy Apostol recalled her and members from the KDP and these other groups carefully planning to protest Marcos' speech soon after the Philippine president's plane landed. Apostol writes that Marcos talked about the positive change he was implementing in the Philippines for the better, "speaking Taglish, making sure that all his 'accomplishments; were said in English for the press to pick up."[73] Apostol unfolded a banner she had prepared for the protest, shouting "'Marcos, Hitler, dictator, tuta!' (Marcos, Hitler, dictator, puppet!) and 'Free all political prisoners' as her other 'comrades' dispersed throughout the crowd did similarly."[74] Marcos

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[71] *Ibid*.

[72] After Marcos declared martial law in 1972, he was not invited back by the U.S. government.

[73] Sorcy Apostol. "No Aloha for Marcos." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 97.
Taglish is code-switching between English and Tagalog. It's common to speak both in the Philippines and among Filipinos in the U.S.

[74] *Ibid*.

gestured to Apostol in response, and said "Paano bay an, mga kababayan?" (What is this, my countrymen?)," trying to discredit the protestors by asking in Tagalog, "Even if I wanted to debate them, they can't even speak out language. They're Americans!"[75] Apostol responded, "'Putang ina mo! Sinong may sabi sa iyo? Sino ang Kano? Pilipino ako!' (You son of a bitch! Who said that? Who's American? I'm Filipino!)."[76] Apostol cites how visibly stunned Marcos was, and that he tried to continue his speech, pretending to be unaffected, but Apostol said that he knew Marcos had lost his composure.

An important part of Apostol's account is that she and the protestors also chanted in English, aware that not just Philippine but American media would capture these activists and break the image of unanimous Filipino support for Marcos. Having anti-Marcos and national democratic activists occupy a *visible* presence in the U.S. media is important for the broader NDM; even if Filipinos try to make moves against U.S. and broader forms of imperialism just within the Philippines, their efforts are invisible to the broader American public. Sorcy Apostol and the other KDP activists at this protest made the movement present in the eyes of the American people, which is important in increasing awareness of the long-term issues that the Philippine people have faced, including U.S. imperialism.

The threat that the KDP posed to Marcos was greater beyond Apostol's subjective assessment of the Honolulu protest. Marcos' desire to crush political dissidents ultimately reached beyond the sphere of Philippine martial law and into the America when KDP activists discovered that Marcos orchestrated the murders of who of their leaders—and he was only able to do so with the aid of U.S. intelligence. In proving that Marcos-hired assassins murdered two

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[75] *Ibid*.

[76] *Ibid*.

Seattle-based KDP leaders, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes at the union office in Seattle's Local 37 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU)[77] June 1, 1981, KDP members uncovered that U.S. intelligence collected information about not only Viernes and Domingo, but the KDP in general, and shared it with the Marcos regime. This brings forth clear evidence of Sison's argument that the U.S. government upholds the "puppet" regimes in the Philippines and also calls for the United States to recognize how its historical imperialist role with the Philippines harms Filipinos—including those on its own soil.

Domingo and Viernes worked in Alaskan canneries[78] in the summers, thus unionizing with the affiliated ILWU, and throughout the 1970s they spearheaded anti-racial discrimination and worker rights efforts, particularly in the Seattle area. The two also worked to reform and democratize the ILWU, which had a corrupt leadership at the time. Because ILWU Local 37 had many Filipino American workers under its membership, Domingo and Viernes gathered American labor support for the workers' movement in the Philippines against Marcos' regime. These actions led up to the two activists' 1981 assassinations. Although Viernes was shot and killed on site, while Domingo was transported to the hospital he told a paramedic that two members of the Tulisan gang—which had benefitted from the ILWU corruption that Domingo and Viernes combatted—had shot them.[79] Domingo passed away at the Harborview Medical center a day later.

In tracing the murders of Domingo and Viernes, KDP members initiated the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (CJDV), which over the course of about a decade learned

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[77] Domingo and Viernes were both union members of the ILWU.

[78] Alaskan cannery work was an industry that Asian Americans had been in for decades. Domingo and Viernes' fathers had both been cannery workers too.

[79] Ron Chew. *Remembering Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes: The Legacy of Filipino American Labor Activism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012): 34.

that Marcos was directly involved in hiring the Tulisan assassins and that the U.S. government had relayed intelligence on the KDP to Marcos' regime. The lawyer working on the murder case, Michael Withey, uncovered documentation that showed that Marcos found the ILWU activists as a threat, and that Marcos agents followed Viernes around in the Philippines when he went there to meet with Philippine labor activists a few weeks before he was murdered.[80]

Members of the CJDV were also suspicious of the U.S. government's involvement in sharing intelligence on Domingo and Viernes, given the cooperative nature between the Philippine and U.S. governments and the especially close relationship between Marcos and Reagan.[81] Local 37 of the ILWU Secretary-Treasurer and KDP member David Della consequently filed a suit against the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act, "contending that the FBI has conducted surveillance on the activities if opponents to the martial law dictatorship in the Philippines," also claiming that "in 1973, Marcos agents under the 'Philippine Infiltration Plan,' began to monitor and harass U.S.-based opponents of the Philippine government."[82] Federal District Court Judge Barbara Rothstein ordered the FBI to release parts of an FBI file, which contained at least 20 documents on Domingo. Many of the FBI's files on the KDP have also been released, containing information not just on Viernes and Domingo, but on other KDP members, the organization's publications, and its operations; although many of the intelligence details are classified, the unclassified components of the documents proved that there was

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[80] Michael Withey. "A Night in Camelot." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 229.

[81] Stanley Karnow. "REAGAN AND THE PHILIPPINES: Setting Marcos Adrift." *The New York Times*, March 19, 1989. Accessed February 10, 2018.

[82] "Federal judge orders release of FBI file on Marcos activist." *International Examiner* (Seattle), July 6, 1983, 10th ed., sec. 13.

correspondence between the Philippine government and FBI throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s.[83]

By December 15, 1989, Marcos—who was in exile in Hawaii since his ousting in 1986—was found liable for the murders and awarded $15.1 million in damages to Domingo and Viernes' families. Rothstein later ruled on January 12, 1990 that Tulisan members Constantine Baruso and Leonilo Malalbed were liable for the killings.[84] No U.S. officials or government body were held accountable for assisting Marcos. The importance of these trials in terms of the KDP's anti-imperialist framing proves that even in the face of mass killings and human rights violations under martial law, the U.S. still backed Marcos and his regime to a point where Marcos could kill activists not just in the Philippines, but in America too. Despite Marcos' corruption, the U.S. needed to support the Philippine president to maintain a military and governmental presence in the Philippines and out of fear that the CPP would overhaul the Philippine government if Marcos were to fall. The documentation uncovered throughout the trials, therefore, brings evidence that Sison and national democratic activists' analysis of the problems of Philippines society—imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism—exists in the post-independence, neo-imperialist era, and that if we do not reckon with the past and present of imperialism, nothing will change.

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[83] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York. 1974. *Katipunan Ng Mga Democratikong Pilipino (KDP) the FBI Investigates the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)]*.
United States Embassy Philippines Office of the, Legal Attache. *Katipunan Ng Mga Democratiking Pilipino (KDP) the U.S. Embassy in Manila Forwards Information on the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP) to the FBI*]., 1974. ProQuest. Web. 1 Mar. 2018.

[84] David Takami. "Judge rules Malabed, Baruso liable in Domingo, Viernes Case." *International Examine*r, January 15, 1990. Accessed March 1, 2018.

Despite the education efforts, mobilization, and action that the KDP engaged in over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, growing destabilization of the CPP and leftist movements in the Philippines led to the dissolution of the KDP in 1986. Noting the groups' correlated fall is important for understanding how the NDM and its later groups, like Anakbayan, evolved and strengthened the movement in the late 1990s, bringing forth more firm plans and ideology that I adopt in my redress section.

Even with the CPP accumulated a significant amount of support and political capital throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there had been a growing divide in perspectives for the left's revolution in the Philippines, which scholar Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet argues was between "reaffirmists" and "rejectionists." The reaffirmists include Sison and his staunch followers, who reaffirm the protracted armed, guerilla struggle and that it to be primarily fought in the countryside. However, the "rejectionists" stressed different tactics within the CPP and NPA. Although rejectionists adopted several positions, they generally believed that democracy should be heightened within the movement to make "more room for input from local cadre in NPA and CPA policy making,"[85] that legal and parliamentary action were more tactically appropriate than guerilla warfare, and that more attention needed to be brought to urban centers to include other exploited workers within cities. The tension between reaffirmists and rejectionists reached a pivotal moment in the 1986 presidential snap election between Marcos and Corazon Aquino. Reaffirmist leaders of the CPP called for a boycott of the election, but many party members disobeyed the directive and advocated against Marcos, even for Aquino in some cases. With many leftist Filipinos beginning to reconsider the position of the NDM after the collapse of many

[85] Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Contemporary Philippine Leftist Politics in Historical Perspective." Patricio N. Abinales, ed., *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*. (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996): 10.

communist states in East Europe and the Soviet Union, Aquino represented a solution to redirecting the movement toward the rejectionist agenda.

The tension escalated alongside the reaffirmist-rejectionist political debate that ensued after anti-Marcos Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. was assassinated upon his return from exile to Manila August 21, 1983. By April 16, 1984, the KDP published "Orientation to Philippine Support Work in the Current Period" in *Ang Aktibista* to take a relatively rejectionist stance, officially break political ties with the CPP, and support the presidential campaign of Aquino's widow, Corazon Aquino. The article critiques the way the Philippine left had responded to Marcos' dip in power and international support after Beningo Aquino Jr. was murdered, citing that it was key for the revolutionary forces to collaborate with Aquino's liberal, "bourgeois opposition" that had risen in popularity at that point, especially since the two had until then cooperated in successfully combatting Marcos.

The article calls for the CPP to reconsider its mission of resistance against the liberal, bourgeois movement because "the left's ability to seize power depends on the strength of its own base and the extent of its allies domestically and internationally. It is already admitted that the [National Democratic Front's] independent base, including its armed strength, is not yet sufficient for a direct seizure of power by the left."[86] Rather, the article states, the leftist revolutionaries in the Philippines should support Aquino, who the writers of the article argue will grant the NDM more stability, unity, and room for critique and democracy than they had seen in recent years within the CPP's core. They write that this is not a move to abandon the national democratic mission; rather, it is to execute it "creatively and not mechanically" through patience

[86] "Appendix II: *Ang Aktibista*: 'Orientation to Philippine Support Work in the Current Period.'" Reprinted in Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 287.

and compromise: "The essence of winning over center forces is their *realignment to the left's perspective and lines*, not their mechanical recruitment."[87]

Two years after this article was written, the KDP formally disbanded in July 1986. Although many of its members continued socialist coalition-building work within organizations like the broad U.S. socialist group, the Line of March (LOM), the KDP's dissolution followed the trend of declining support for the CPP and NPA in the Philippines. In the mid-1980s the NPA controlled about 20 percent of Philippine villages and urban neighborhoods, but by the early 1990s, that percentage sank to three percent.[88]

Although this moment for the KDP and in the broader Philippine left movement indicated a collapse of communism in the Philippines, the NDM was still a core belief that many held on to. However, when nothing structurally changed in terms of Sison's theorized three basic problems of Philippine society—imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism—doubt in Aquino and her preceding "bourgeois opportunist" presidents and mission caused the left to reemerge in the mid-1990s. In the next section, I will discuss how a failure to reckon with the history of imperialism and corruption in the Philippines after the revolutionary movement had built up and collapsed in political capital spurred a new wave of early 21st century national democratic Filipino activists who aim to complete the "unfinished revolution."

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[87] *Ibid*, 309.
[88] Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet.

V. Anakbayan: The National Democratic Movement After Marcos and into the 21st Century

By learning from the mistakes of the NDM in the past and working against new imperialist challenges it faced, Anakbayan rose in 1998 as one of the groups that revitalized the national democratic cause. In this section, I will explain how the NDM recovered after Marcos' fall, how Anakbayan refreshed national democratic ideology and developed new campaigns, and how I can use the group's vision, actions, and strategy as tools for addressing the history of U.S. empire.

As I noted at the end of the last section, the KDP's dissolution in 1986 was in line with a sudden trend of destabilization among organizations and members in the NDM around the time of Ferdinand Marcos' fall in 1986. According to 1990s Filipino student activist and 1998 founding Secretary General of Anakbayan Philippines Renato "Nato" Reyes, the challenges the NDM faced at this point in history were more internal rather than external to the greater political events occurring at the time:

> There was an incorrect analysis of the objective situation at the time, a failure to point out that the class character of the state remained unchanged and that Aquino represented the ruling landlord class. Some erroneous views included the analysis that Aquino was part of the liberal bourgeoisie. … This, more than external factors, were to blame for the weakening.[89]

This "incorrect analysis" manifests in the reaffirmist-rejectionist division I noted in the previous section; internal tension within the NDM about how to move forward prevented progress within the movement. Sison consequently tried to reconsolidate the movement by publishing "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors" in December, 1991. In the essay, Sison writes that the members of the NDM had to revisit and more deeply follow its "reaffirmist"

[89] Renato Reyes. Interview by Melissa Harris. Personal Interview, via Facebook. Oberlin, January 28, 2018.

mission and blame revisionists, otherwise known as the "rejectionists," as the reason behind the revolution's faltering status. He argues that the rejectionists within the NDM who deviated toward supporting leaders like Aquino "flew away from concrete conditions and the actual strength of the revolutionary forces and overreached for a quick victory by skipping the necessary stages for advancing the revolution."[90] The KDP's decision to support Corazon Aquino for president largely represents the mistakes of the NDM that Reyes and Sison note. The publishing of Sison' article marked the "Second Great Rectification Movement" of the National Democratic Revolution,[91] which led the NDM to consolidate its supporters and influenced rejectionists to establish their own or integrate into already existing political parties.

The Second Great Rectification Movement, according to Reyes, led to the formation of Anakbayan—the official youth sector of the NDM in the Philippines. The previous youth sectors of the NDM were Kabataan Makabayan (KM), which was armed and aligned with the CPP and has been underground with the CPP since Marcos' initiation of martial law in 1972.[92] The closest following organization was the League of Filipino Students (LFS), which was not broadly youth-based, but was just student-based. Reyes wrote in an article that Sison had called for the LFS to create a broader youth organization to incorporate more youth in the Philippines—such as young peasants, workers, and farmers, who did not necessarily have the resources to study and find LFS

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[90] Armando Liwang, "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors," *Rebolusyon: Theoretical and Political Journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, July 1993: 2.
Sison wrote this essay under the pseudonym Armando Liwang. Although he published it initially in December 1991, it wasn't formally published in this CPP journal until 1993.

[91] The first rectification movement of the Communist Party was in the 1960s when Sison and the CPP separated from the old Communist Party, the PKP.

[92] Kabataan Makabayan was established in 1964, 4 years before the Communist movement in the Philippines was revitalized as the CPP. It still exists today, but because KM, as well as the CPP and NPA, are underground, militant organizations that operate mainly in the Philippine countryside, it is important to note that the KM and Anakbayan are completely separate organizations.

chapters—into the NDM. It was not until 1998 that LFS and other student organizations from universities in the Philippines united to create Anakbayan's first National Organizing Committee (NOC): "The Anakbayan Founding Conference was launched from November 28-30 at the Del Pan Sports Complex, Tondo, Manila. The Tondo masses adopted delegates from different regions. The conference includes all existing national democratic youth and student organizations."[93] At its founding, Anakbayan was established as a "comprehensive national democratic mass organization for Filipino youth and students," namely between the ages of 13 and 35. In the organization's orientation program, it cites the purpose of its members and mission within the broader movement for national democracy: "[The youth] are open to revolutionary ideas, sensitive to injustice, in the best physical condition, and are ready to do whatever neds to be done, not only for the youth, but for the people as a whole."[94]

At the Anakbayan Philippines Founding Congress on November 30, 1998,[95] Jose Maria Sison delivered a message to the organization, highlighting the importance of establishing youth sector of the NDM while also showing the ongoing influence Sison had over different sectors within the movement. He cited that Anakbayan should continue the work of the KM but in an above-ground, legal way to build further solidarity with young people. "Failure to build a comprehensive youth organization," Sison said, "would mean the aging and death of the revolutionary movement, as can be seen in the case of parties and movements whose elders

[93] Renato Reyes. "Mula Tondo hanggang EDSA-Mendiola: Unang 3 taon ng Anakbayan (1998—2001)." Translated by Melissa Harris and Cathy Harris. *Like a Rolling Stone: an activist musician's life in the mass movement*, November 29, 2015. (https://natoreyes.wordpress.com/2015/11/29/mula-tondo-hanggang-edsa-mendiola-unang-3-taon-ng-anakbayan-1998-2001/)

[94] *Ibid*.

[95] November 30 is an intentional date, according to Anakbayan, because it is the anniversary of 19th century Philippine revolutionary Andres Bonifacio.

forget they were once young revolutionaries and seem to think that they can only trust themselves and fail to develop a great mass of young successors."[96]

In the founding of more specific demographically oriented sectors of the NDM—whether with youth and students in Anakbayan or women in GABRIELA[97], both of which are *legal* and above-ground in the Philippines and abroad—the movement regained traction in maintaining its original revolutionary cause while also gaining leverage with restructuring and reconsoldation that led to Anakbayan's founding. The multiple faces that the NDM took moving into the 20th century helped in its revitalization while still remaining rooted in *PSR*'s original mission. Just as the movement developed organizations specific to different demographical orientations and took on diverse strategies to realize the liberation of the Philippines, I draw from this multifaceted element of the NDM in the Anakbayan-era in the final section to show that multiple fronts to redressing empire are key.

In the face of continued semi-feudal and semi-colonial structures and operations in the Philippines throughout Aquino's then Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada's presidential terms, Anakbayan established itself relatively strongly from the beginning. For instance, in the first three years of its existence, it contributed greatly to the ousting of President Estrada in 2001 with its role in the Metro Manila uprisings to push for his impeachment.[98] Since Anakbayan had built

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[96] Jose Maria Sison to Anakbayan Philippines, "MESSAGE TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ANAK NG BAYAN," November, 30, 1998. (https://www.scribd.com/doc/224463212/1st-Anakbayan-Founding-Congress-1998-Message-From-JMS)

[97] GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action) is an international national democratic alliance of Filipino women that was founded in 1984 in the Philippines and later established chapters in the U.S. in the early 20th century.

[98] Renato Reyes.

Estrada was charged with plunder and perjury, accused of siphoning off taxes from tobacco and accepting millions of dollars from illegal gambling operators.

a considerably strong base in its first few years and also believed that the United States played an integral role in influencing the conditions of Philippine society, Reyes said that members of Anakbayan in the Philippines reached out to work with national democratic activists and Filipino American organizations in the United States to hopefully establish Anakbayan chapters throughout the States.[99]

Before discussing how Anakbayan came to the United States, it is important to understand its core mission, which as I emphasized before, is different from that of the NDM revolutionary forces like the KM, CPP, or NPA. Anakbayan's primary intention is to educate and incorporate young people in the Philippines and abroad into the greater NDM while also advocating against injustices committed against the Filipino masses. As we saw with Sison and the KDP, Anakbayan also has a mission outlined in a point-by-point program.[100] The eighth point, that Anakbayan, "Strongly unite with youth organizations abroad and form a broad anti-imperialist front of the youth: form chapters of Anakbayan among the ranks of the Filipino youth abroad" is telling of how Anakbayan spread abroad to the United States. Although the existence of groups like the KDP show that the NDM was not a foreign one to Filipinos in America, the formation of Anakbayan and the revitalization of the movement in the Philippines is directly related to the rise of Anakbayan and similar groups in America again moving into the 20th century.

Furthermore, as 2017 Anakbayan New Jersey Secretary General Gian Parel stated, the 9/11 terrorist attacks also awakened a new form of military neo-imperialism in the U.S. as it embarked on a global mission of anti-terrrorism, which has also affected the Philippines,

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[99] Renato Reyes. Interview by Melissa Harris. Personal Interview, via Facebook. Oberlin, January 28, 2018.

[100] See Appendix 3.

especially given the long-term conflict the Moro Muslim peoples have waged with the Philippine government:

> After 9/11 the Philippines was kind of basically the second front of the War on Terror, after Afghanistan. I guess that brings us to this day in age, where we still see the War on Terror. … I guess today, where we see like the rise of fascism across the globe, not just in the Philippines, not just in the U.S., I think it's interesting to see where we're at, where, example, rewinding back to the '60s, '70s—that was a time when the national democratic movement in the Philippines was only starting to grow. Now, we're, how many years now? 50 years after, and the movement has matured so much since then. And it's still the same basic problems, even 50 years later.[101]

The "same basic problems" Parel cited are imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism, first of all showing how even in 2018, the national democratic line has remained the same ideology. In light of political and global events and changes, such as the post-9/11 War on Terror, the national democratic lens of looking at these events has only reinforced its perspective. For instance, Filipino scholar E. San Juan Jr. writes that the post-9/11 invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, greatly waged as wars to protect global democracy, were a continuation of the United States' pursuit for "relentless quest of world domination by military means," and "the defense of neoliberal democracy by fascist violence."[102] According to these activists' perspective, therefore, American overreach in the early 21st century, like the War on Terror, were just continued imperialist operations that the United States had conducted throughout its history in global affairs.

The age of heightened globalization and the United States' role in it affected the founding of Anakbayan's first chapter in Seattle. The politicization and action that led to its establishment was largely born out of the prominent 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization's

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[101] Gian Parel.

[102] E. San Juan, Jr. *Toward Filipino Self-Determination: Beyond Transnational Globalization*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009): 1.

Ministerial Conferene in Seattle, "which introduced unfair trade politicies between the Philippines and the United States," and was ultimately shut down because of mass protests of "people [who] resisted against the neoliberal policies of the World Trade Organization."[103] Filipino college students from the greater Washington area recognized that this was a unifying moment, influencing them to create Anakbayan Seattle, which was formally established November 30, 2002. Since 2002, U.S. chapters of Anakbayan have been established in Los Angeles, Hawaii, New York-New Jersey,[104] Chicago, Silicon Valley, East Bay area, and San Diego. In Chicago in 2012, individual U.S. Anakbayan chapters united to become a national structure as Anakbayan USA.

Parel said that despite the growing presence and work that Anakbayan has and does in America, he stressed that the group's primary "revolution" is that in the Philippines and that the purpose of extending the NDM to the U.S. geopolitical sphere is to fight imperialism "within the belly of the beast":

> When you're doing Filipino activism from abroad, from outside the Philippine borders, it's got to be rooted in that so much of the Philippine global population is outside. … What pushes Filipinos out in the first place, to go to America, to come to Canada, to be migrant workers in Hong Kong or Singapore? It's internal to what's happening in the Philippines. What's happening to Filipino Americans is also internal to what's happening in the Philippines. Even if it doesn't maybe affect you personally, who grew up most all of your life in the U.S., you still grew up with maybe your family, who have instilled those three basic problems and internalized them. So then its also internal to you.[105]

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[103] Jenilee Policarpio. "KILUSAN // MOVEMENT | Anakbayan Seattle 12th Anniversary," BAYAN USA Pacific Northwest. November 26, 2014. (https://bayanusapnw.wordpress.com/2014/11/26/kilusan-movement-anakbayan-seattle-12th-anniversary-sunday-november-30/)
Policarpio is cited as the reference for the press release.

[104] The NY-NJ chapter of Anakbayan later split into separate New Jersey and New York chapters around 2011 and 2012.

[105] Gian Parel.

While Parel described the emotional and personal importances of maintaining the NDM in the United States, 2017 National Secretary General Joelle Lingat—who was also the former Chairperson and former Secretary General of Anakbayan New Jersey—further explained the technical role that Anakbayan's educational work does in America:

> We have a role to oppose and expose the US from within to our fellow Filipinos within the U.S., because if we completely neglect the U.S. and say, "Oh, we don't need to organize there," then there will be a constant vacuum of knowledge. The biggest threat to organizing, not just with Anakbayan but in general, as to the status quo is destabilizing people's political consciousness, and that it makes them question things they've been accepting their whole lives as truths.[106]

Since Anakbayan USA consists mostly of Filipinos in America and Filipino-born Americans, driving the importance of how rooting their work in the Philippines is key for this organization. It has helped Parel, Lingat, and other Anakbayan members understand why and how they and their families migrated to the United States, just as it did for other national democratic Filipino activists from earlier generations. They see that whatever conditions Filipinos face in the United States and abroad is central to the conditions and push-migration factors that exist in Philippine society. Therefore, unlike the KDP—which had a mission identity crisis by drawing a separate line between the national democratic fight in the Philippines and the fight for equality and socialism in the United States—Anakbayan sees its work as one in the same. To resolve the three basic problems of Filipino society, in other words, is to stop the export of overseas Filipino workers and the exploitation and vulnerabilities they face working and migrating abroad, as well aslo make the United States accountable for its role as an imperialist power not just in the Philippines, but in other countries throughout the world. To realize these changes, spreading awareness in the United States is a central part to Anakbayan's

[106] Joelle Lingat. Interview by Melissa Harris. Personal Interview. Jersey City, January 21, 2018.

American operations; to that effect, Anakbayan and the KDP similarly stress the role of education in spreading the NDM.

Other similarities between the KDP and Anakbayan are that they have both held educational discussions and workshop—including eight-hour studies of Sison's *Philippine Society and Revolution*—which for Anakbayan has helped it in recruitment, especially from conducting these on college campuses. Anakbayan also organizes exposure trips to the Philippines to learn on-the-ground about the issues Filipinos face, and Anakbayan activists also organize, protest, and pinpoint ways in which Filipinos and other victims of U.S. imperialism face exploitation and violence against American institutions. Like the KDP, Anakbayan stands against the killings of national democratic activists in the Philippines through its "Stop the Killings" campaign by spreading awareness of how the U.S.-trained and backed Philippine military extrajudicially kill people like "Freddie 'Fermin' Ligiw, a member of Ankbayan in the northern Philippine province of Abra, and his brother and father … The bodies were found in a shallow grave Saturday, March 8, 2014, with their hands tied and their mouths gagged. Freddie had disappeared just as we was about to meet with human rights advocates on March 2, 2014."[107]

These extrajudicial activist killings echo Marcos-era killings of non-militant dissidents over the past 40 years—similar even to the way the KDP retaliated against Marcos for his sponsored assassinations of Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes of the KDP. Since the 2016 rise of President Rodrigo Duterte—who has, in recent history, also launched stringent martial law procedures and increased Philippine military extraducial killings—elements of Marcos' regime

[107] "Stop the Killings," Anakbayan-USA, 2014. (http://www.anakbayanusa.org/portfolio/stop-the-killings/) Ligiw, a member of Anakbayan, was not a militant activist. He and many other non-violent activists have been killed by state-sponsored military violence since the end of the Marcos era.

and the long-term operations of American-backed military violence have emerged strongly again in recent history.

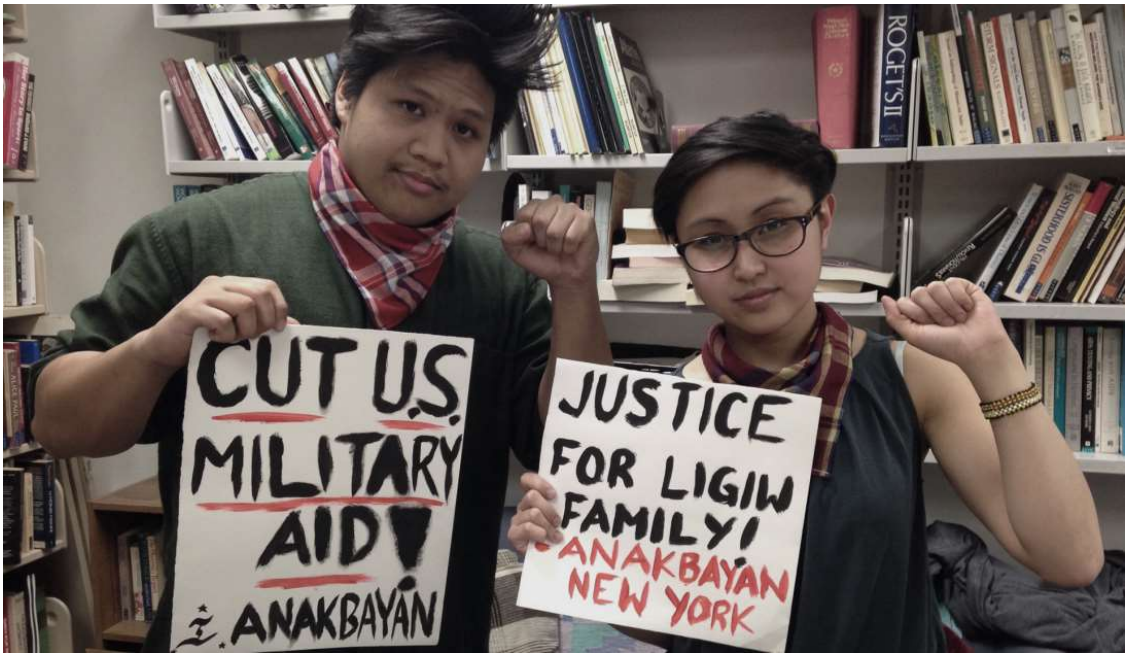

Figure 1: Anakbayan New York members pose with posters to stand against the extrajudicial killings of non-militant national democratic activists in the Philippines.

Another Philippines-centered campaign that Anakbayan supports—and is not so differently connected from "Stop the Killings"—is its fight against U.S. military presence in the Philippines. Although the Philippine Senate rejected a renewal of U.S. military bases in 1991, in 1998, the U.S. and Philippine governments signed the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which effectively granted the U.S. government jurisdiction over American military personnel accused of committing crimines in the Philippines, so long as the U.S. government notified Philippine authorities when Philippine personnel in America were also apprehended or arrested. The U.S. State Department writes in the document that such "cooperation between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines promotes their common security interests,"[108] but the VFA has

[108] U.S. Department of State. "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines Regarding the Treatment of United States Armed Forces Visiting the Philippines," February 10, 1998. TIAS no. 12931. United States Treaties and Other International Agreements.

been invoked in ways to protect U.S. military personell from facing consequences for crimes they have committed. These perpetrations range from the continued violence against the indigenous and Moro Muslims in Mindanao as foreign and American agrocorporations encroach upon their territories.

An example of how Anakbayan has attacked the American abuses of the VFA is when the organization campaigned against the United States for the way it handled U.S. Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton's murder 26-year-old transgender Filipina Jennifer Laude in 2014, allegedly by asphyxiation and drowning. Because American officials invoked VFA rules, Pemberton was consequently found guilty of homicide rather than murder, and his sentence was reduced significantly to 10 years. In an Anakbayan press release, the organization cited this case and the VFA as a continuation of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines: "Invoking the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) to ensure special treatment for Pemberton, the US once more blatantly violated Philippine laws. That American authorities can do this inside the premises of a Philippine court speaks much of the continuing stranglehold of US imperialism over the country."[109] The statement also highlights other agreements, such as the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, the Mutual Defense Treaty, and the Mutual Logistics Support Treaty to indicate how the United States has rebuilt its imperialist military presence in the Philippines and protected its personnel from facing the consequences of further perpetrations.

Although the Pemberton case is a more recent one highlighting perpetrations committed by U.S. military personnel in the Philippines, histories of violence—especially sexual violence—are rampant at U.S. military bases throughout Philippine history. In the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, Subic Naval Base's proximity to Olongapo City—an area growing in the entertainment

[109] "Jail Joseph Pemberton in the Philippines! Justice for Jennifer Laude! – Anakbayan," Anakbayan, December 2, 2015.

industry at the time—enabled Americans at the base to easily exploit and violate Filipinos. In the 1989, Davis wrote that "More than 30 000 Filipinos are called upon to meet the huge sexual appetite of American service personnel, who care nothing for the misery, wretchedness and emotional poverty of the women and children they use and abuse by the hour."[110]

Although the Jennifer Laude case is one of several that have particularly involved sexual violence against Filipinos by American military personnel, this one is particularly an important distinction in highlighting how the NDM has grown since the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, Gil Mangaoang wrote that he had to suppress his queer identity to uplift the primary cause of the movement when he was a member of the KDP.[111] In the 21st century with Anakbayan campaigns like "Justice for Jennifer Laude: Trans Lives Matter," LGBTQ+ rights have moved more toward the inner circle of understanding and combating imperialist violence. While the NDM has remained the same in its core ideology, its scope of work has become more inclusive over the course of more contemporary history. Stressing the rising role of marginalized identities within the NDM is an important component that I consider in my redress proposal, especially when we must grapple with the questions of *who* receives restitution and healing and *how* do we cater to the various harms inflicted upon Filipinos from the equally complex nature of imperialism.

Anakbayan USA chapters have their own American-based campaigns as well aside from educating Filipino youth. Many of the actions include advocacy against hawkish immigration policies; solidarity work with other marginalized groups like Native Americans, immigrant populations, and women and queer people; and student and worker rights. These many fights

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[110] Leonard Davis, 110.

[111] Gil Mangaoang. "Hitting the High Notes." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 116.

especially manifest in Anakbayan's support for exploited or mistreated Filipino workers in the United States. Jonna Valdez, the first Secretary General of Anakbayan New York-New Jersey in 2006, said that one of the earlier actions that Anakbayan NY-NJ participated in was in supporting the "Sentosa 27," or the 26 nurses and one physical therapist who were recruited from the Philippines through the Sentosa Care LLC healthcare recruitment company in New York. The 27 were promised positions and that they would work directly for nursing home facilities that had sponsored their work visas. Upon arriving in New York, however, most of the nurses ended up at nursing home facilities that were different from the ones that had sponsored them; many found their permit applications had not been submitted or processed. Because of this, many could not immiediate work upon arrival and were forced to work as clerks making significantly lower hourly wages at less hours. Even after they received their work permits, the healthcare workers endured poor living and working conditions:

> Upon her arrival, Annabelle Capulong [one of the nurses] described the living conditions, 'The staff house was dilapidate, the furnitures and appliances were garbade, and the living spaces were crowded.' In addition to horrid living conditions, Archiel Buagas [another worker] was subject to frustrating working conditions with almost 30-60 patients per shift and constant multi-tasking, doing the job of two to three people.[112]

Valdez recalled how Anakbayan and other Filipino organizations marched and advocated for the workers when they striked and filed a legal battle against Sentosa: "They were trafficked by the Sentosa healthcare facility. … And they were accused because they held a picket during their break time, so they were removed from their work, and their licenses were revoked. So we helped bring back their licenses and put the company accountable to the nurses."[113]

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[112] "Fil-Am Youth Support the Sentosa 27 Nurses, Decry Education for Exportation," Anakbayan New York-New Jersey, May 17, 2007. (http://anakbayan-nynj.blogspot.com/2007/05/fil-am-youth-support-sentosa-27-nurses.html)

[113] Jonna Valdez. Interview by Melissa Harris. Personal Interview. Jersey City, January 21, 2018.

The Sentosa 27 and other cases of overseas Filipino working trafficking and contract fraud show a continued trend of American exploitation of Filipino labor. In the 1930s, Carlos Bulosan faced false promises of socioeconomic mobility by coming to the United States to pursue the American Dream, only to face racial discrimination and severe, underpaid working conditions. In the 1970s and 1980s, the KDP advocated for overseas healthcare workers and farmworkers like Misael "Bo" Apostol. Recent history illustrates a continuation of exploitation by American industries. National democratic Filipino organizations in the United States bring visibility to these continued abuses and how they are rooted in the broader imperialist relationship that the United States—both its government and economic industries—has maintained with the Philippines. Abuse of overseas workers must be considered, therefore, when considering how to make the United States accountable for its imperialist history.

Another integral component of Anakbayan USA's American-specific work is in its "Take Back Our Education" campaign. Anakbayan USA has advocated against the increasing financial inaccessibility of educational opportunities in the United States. At the same time, Anakbayan pointed out the trends of increased U.S. military spending over the past 20 years and more recent cuts to social spending, including education. Since Anakbayan USA saw how labor export policy in the Philippines has systemically sent its people to study and work abroad since the 1970s, it sees a direct link between the crises young Filipinos have in both America and the Philippines and the way education then becomes a tool for continued neo-imperialism. In the United States, Filipinos undergo historical amnesia since "they are not taught the history of Filipinos in the United States, especially about Filipinos' positive contribution in the fight for justice here in the United States."[114] Meanwhile in the Philippines, the K-12 educational system has continued to

[114] "Take Back Our Education: People First, Not Profit and War."

operate as "a scheme to turn Filipino youth into more easily exportable and exploitable cheap labor to meet the needs of the international market."[115] Take Back Our Education, in many ways then, is another way in which Anakbayan consolidated components of the KDP's dual-line program—one of supporting Filipino national democratic rights and spreading socialist values in the United States—in one mission. It sees education as the means for maintaining the status quo of imperialism, from allowing continuing U.S. imperialist military operations abroad to further enabling the exploitation of Filipino bodies overseas.

In highlighting how imperialism plays into Philippine and America, Anakbayan formed tangible educational reform demands in its Take Back Our Education campaign. These demands are ones that the Untied State might well consider as part of a historical justice project for empire. These demands are to:

1. Redirect funds from military spending and foreign military aid in the Philippines towards education and social services.
2. Stop the privatization of public education. Make public education free at all levels and cancel all student debt.
3. Implement pro-people, culturally relevant curriculum and ethnic studies.
4. End campus repression and ensure the rights of youth and workers on campuses and communities they affect.[116]

These four points would reshape the relationship the U.S. and Philippines have with each other, in terms of creating a revised historical understanding of empire and withdrawing further U.S. military presence and violence from the Philippines. This is an important element that I consider in the final section in my paper; the realization of this campaign would educationally provide a form of restitution for overseas Filipinos—whether Filipinos in America or Filipino-born Americas—through greater educational opportunities that are more relelvant to Filipinos while

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[115] *Ibid*.

[116] *Ibid*.

also informing non-Filipino Americans about the deep-seeded role of the Philippines in U.S. history and the former in the latter's.

Anakbayan, as this section has highlighted, has contributed to the evolution and growth of the NDM in the early 21st century. I want to end this section on Anakbayan by bringing it up into its most recent history in terms of Philippine-U.S. relations—namely Anakbayan's rejection of Duterte and President Donald Trump. The two were both elected in 2016 and both ran on nationalist platforms; Duterte's presidential campaign especially ran with a specifically anti-American agenda. But since becoming president, Duterte has launched martial law and iniated a war on drugs, which has led to the extrajudicial killings of several thousand Filipinos and has been maintained through continued cooperation with U.S. military support of the AFP. Duterte, as I said before, echoes simultaneously the inhumane policies and violence of the Marcos regime while also representing the broken promises of change posed by post-Marcos presidents, according to Anakbayan:

> For all his anti-US posturing, Duterte has had no concrete steps to remove US military forces from the country. Instead, he now coyly seeks US support for martial law in the guise of fighting terrorism. His economic team continues neoliberal policies that keeps the economy dependent on foreign investments and loans, favor rich oligarchs, and hit the poor the hardest. He has not junked contractualization, failed to freely distribute land to farmers, and now wishes to impose new and harsher taxes.[117]

Anakbayan cites that over 1,000 have died from martial law in Mindanao, 400,000 have been displaced, and nearly 100 peasant rights activists have been extrajudicially killed because of Duterte as of November 2017.[118] Anakbayan condemned Trump equally for his compliance,

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[117] "Anakbayan: The US-Duterte regime is no friend of the Filipino People," Anakbayan, July 24, 2017. (http://www.anakbayan.org/anakbayan-the-us-duterte-regime-is-no-friend-of-the-filipino-people/)

[118] Adrian Bonifacio, "Uphold the Revolutionary Tradition of the Filipino Youth! Fight the Fascist U.S.-Duterte Regime!" Anakbayan-USA, November 30, 2017. (http://www.anakbayanusa.org/uphold-the-revolutionary-tradition-of-the-filipino-youth-fight-the-fascist-u-s-duterte-regime/)

even praise, for Duterte's despotic and inhumane governance. In a press release, Anakbayan USA specifically criticized Trump's visit to Manila in 2017: "Trump's most recent visit to the Philippines consolidated U.S. imperialism's hold over the Philippines, and Trump's promised financial, military, and political support to Duterte have only emboldened him to commit fascist attacks on the Filipino people."[119] Trump's endorsement of Duterte mirrors Ronald Reagan's complicity in Marcos' regime, showing how history has repeated itself in the Philippine-America age of post-independence and neo-imperialism.

My purpose for bringing the history of the Philippine NDM in the United States so closely to the present is to showcase just how present imperialism from the past remains. Although Filipino national democratic activists have made strides in growing their movement internationally, a failure for the United States to address its history of imperialism has caused the Filipino people to suffer, both in the Philippines and the United States. I will end the Anakbayan section with the words of Yves Nibungco, the first National Secretary General of Anakbayan USA, who spoke to me about the point in history Anakbayan finds itself in now and how it is a critical moment in the overarching timeline of national democratic activism:

> I think it's the best time, the most crucial time to be an activist. Knowing the current political and economic, even environmental situation we're in, we're having this climate crisis, we have a president who wants to bomb another country and start a nuclear war, a president back home in the Philippines who's just killing everyone. I think it's very crucial as Filipino Americans or Filipinos migrants to be activists—not just activists, but national democratic activists. Being part of organizations like Anakbayan because our demographic as part of the Filipino diaspora, we stand at an intersection. We're products of the social injustices of the Philippines. At the same time we're living inside, as we call it, the belly of the beast, so we're in the best position, a good position, to contribute to the advancement of the struggle back home, while at the same time, pulling up with other movements of oppressed peoples and nationalities here in the United States.[120]

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[119] *Ibid*.

[120] Yves Nibungco. Interview by Melissa Harris. Personal Interview. Jersey City, January 21, 2018.

VI. Redressing American Empire Through a Filipino National Democratic Lens

Considering the redress theory I discussed in section one and the imperialist and activist histories I have presented, this section considers how we might grapple with and address the history and continuation of U.S. empire, namely in terms of the national democratic angle. Here, I argue that to bring justice to a perpetration as deep-seeded, long-term, and nuanced as empire, historical redress needs to be reconfigured. Typically, "redress" is conceived in a backward-looking way, and it usually aims to rectify pinpointed, specific events in the past, such as World War II Japanese American internment or the 1921 Tulsa race riot. Such events are arguably easier to address than empire, which is broader and varies in degree throughout time, space, and the magnitude of wrongful actions. Because empire is something that still affects the Philippines and many other formerly colonized nations today, we should look to an alternative, more sophisticated way of bringing justice to the legacies of imperialism and empire: While justice should be backward-looking in the traditional sense of acknowledging and rectifying histories of empire, it should also be *forward-looking*, in that we need to address imperialism today and ensure that 120 years of U.S. empire finally ends. The backward-forward way of addressing empire can be realized through the framework that national democratic activists base their work in: educating, organizing and mobilizing.

I want to highlight that because imperialism occurred on a broad scale—both in time and scope—clearly a straightforward, one-time transfer of resources, such as monetary reparations or payment is unlikely to rectify the enduring and entrenched nature of imperialism. Both Parel and Lingat highlighted that the systemic problems from imperialism cannot be fixed through

monetary means: "It's not like the Filipinos are asking at this stage for reparations."[121] Rather, there is the "need for an on-going commitment on the part of the advantaged party to correct the distributive distortion caused by both the initial wrongdoing and the subsequent failure to fulfill rectificatory obligations." [122] To maintain accountability in providing continuous forms of restitution—especially for the United States, which fails to acknowledge its imperialist pasts—educating the American people to reshape its national identity to include a critique of its imperialist character will help mediate the long-term effort to drive a balanced relationship between the United States and the countries it has imperialized, including the Philippines.

As many Filipino activists whom I have highlighted throughout this paper have found, educational understanding of Philippine history and U.S. imperialism is a crucial starting point for transforming both Filipino and general American thought on their individual and national senses of identity. Post-1898 Philippine educational systems, as both scholars and Filipino and Filipino American activists have noted, were shaped based on American models of education. The consequences of this have led Filipinos to believe in American superiority, displace themselves from their home country to study and work abroad, and remain blind to American imperialist presence throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. In the United States, American students are never taught to consider or critique the United States' historical or current role as an imperialist power. Therefore, including Filipino and American imperialist histories would act as a simultaneously symbolic and tangible form of bringing justice to histories of U.S. empire.

As many KDP and Anakbayan activists have indicated, the opportunity that their organizations gave them to learn about the Philippines and America's role in it reshaped their

[121] Joelle Lingat.

[122] Daniel Butt, 239.

perspectives of both society and themselves, acting largely as a symbolic form of healing for Filipinos who blindly suffered to consequences of imperialism. Recall Bo Apostol from the KDP, who faced migrant worker trafficking abuses. He wrote that "it wasn't until the car rides with KDP activists to the organizing meetings that I understood the US-Philippine relationship … and the need for systemic reform in the Philippines."[123] Joelle Lingat of Anakbayan-NJ also said that she wished she had the information she learned from Anakbayan in high school, because in retrospect she has pinpointed how many of the individual challenges she had were rooted in the greater systemic problems caused by imperialism: "If I had the tools I had now—the analysis of systemic issues I do now—I feel like my life would have been much more palatable and malleable as a young teenage girl rather than feeling so isolated within the current system, feeling so different and alone compared to my peers."[124] Symbolically, therefore, incorporating—and in the Philippines, suggesting to incorporate—imperialist histories into American education systems would give future generations of Filipinos and Filipino Americans the opportunity to understand their own pasts and know how to navigate their worlds better, accordingly.

Education would also give other American students the intellectual tools to engage with a critical perspective of how the United States operates, so that hopefully they will act as bearers of anti-imperialist action as they become future leaders and shapers of society. Following the model of Filipino national democratic activists, beginning with education as a root source of historical justice will create a ripple effect throughout American and consequently Filipino and imperialized people's societies. Education allows the intellectual tools to understand U.S.

[123] Apostol, Bo. "Not the Usual Path," 67.

[124] Joelle Lingat.

imperialist systems and how they operate both in the past and present, to empathize with imperialism's victims, and to form apologies and build ideological solidarity. From the symbolic then, the tangible grows. And in the immediate sense, the United States could follow Anakbayan's Take Back Our Education Campaign to redirect military spending in the Philippines to help fund Philippine public education system instead.

From deciding how to introduce imperialist histories into U.S. education systems, deciding *what* histories to include in the curriculum are important; it would be easy to sterilize the histories of imperialism, just as so many schools have with histories of exploited migrant labor; of American Indian genocide, land disenfranchisement, and removal of sovereignty; and of African American slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, racial violence, and mass incarceration. Because of this, involving Filipino historians and activists involved in educational reform processes would be key for shaping how we conceive imperialist histories, and I would also add that implementing a truth commission would be valuable in allowing Filipinos who have fallen victim to imperialism the opportunity to shape those histories as well.

I first look to Cindy Domingo, a KDP activist and sister of the assassinated Silme Domingo, who wrote her master's thesis with the help of the KDP National Executive Board about how the 20th century Philippine education system was "used as a tool for US imperialism." Her and four other students' work aimed to help the West Coast Pilipino Teacher's Education Task Force (ETF) find "secondary and college-level history textbooks to expose their distorted perspectives of Philippine history" while working toward "providing alternative readings with a realistic approach to Philippine history."[125] Work like Domingo's and other activists and Filipino

[125] Cindy Domingo. "Fighting US Imperialism with a Master's Degree." Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, ed., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP).* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): 120.

historical scholars should be consulted in the reshaping of history programs to maintain integrity while integrating imperialism into educational reform.

To create greater symbolic historical restitution, a truth commission would also be valuable for informing how imperialist histories are shaped, while also giving a forum for Filipinos in both the Philippines, America, and abroad to tell their stories in an official, validly recognized space. Truth commissions are typically organized by a governmental body and aim to uncover past wrongdoings by serving as a forum for victims and perpetrators to testify, with the hope of seeking ways to consequently resolve those pasts. One of truth commissions' purposes is to affect "the social understanding and acceptance of the country's past, not just to resolve specific facts."[126] Therefore, not only could a truth commission help shape the educational, factual narratives we could construct for a prospective educational program, but it could also help bring closure and healing from the past through what it would symbolize for Filipinos and perhaps other groups that have faced perpetrations from U.S. imperialism: an official acknowledgement to heal wounds from the past and the visibility and breakage of silence about unspoken truths. The representative nature of a truth commission would also allow for the Philippine people to overcome the geopolitical barriers they might face in making redress demands to the United States, which I touched upon in the introduction.

One of the important components of the NDM is to ensure that marginalized individuals—such as women, queer people, and indigenous and minority groups—have equal justice within the movement and in the realization of the Philippines' national democracy. Jonna Valdez, who I noted was not only part of Anakbayan, but of GABRIELA, a Filipina activist organization, said, "Women are experiencing more exploitation and oppression. … The women

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[126] Priscilla B. Haynar. *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*. (New York: Routledge, 2011): 11.

are fighting two struggles. There's the class struggle, then there's the gender struggle, so it's only important and just for the women to also be empowered and fight for their rights and have their own voice." A truth commission would provide the space for these marginalized groups to realize a symbolic form of justice, and as Valdez indicated, would be a way of making this component of a historical justice project for empire "of the masses," which is integral to the core of the NDM's mission. Although a truth commission is something that national democratic activists have not explicitly advocated for, from a historian's perspective, I suggest it should be a method considered in strengthening the scope of healing and rectification that a historical justice project seeks.

From a truth commission and educational program, a project historical justice for U.S. imperialism can reach the stage inspired by activism's "mobilization and organization" models. This is where the symbolic and informational becomes action. Just as how activists first educate and politicize potential recruits for their organizations, from incorporating imperialist histories into educational curricula and gathering information about the harms imperialism has committed against Filipinos, action can take place. I asked current and former Anakbayan members what they considered the greatest course of action for the United States to take in amending its legacies of imperialism. All of them connected their responses to the core matter of the NDM: "mutual respect and acknowledgement of our rights to self-determination,"[127] "for U.S. imperialism to get out. What that might mean is end the unequal military and economic treaties. Get the military bases out of the Philippines."[128] In conversation with the demands of the KDP, which were largely the same as Anakbayan's, the core way these groups believe the United

[127] Joelle Lingat.

[128] Gian Parel.

States should rectify its legacy of empire is to remove itself militarily and to balance the asymmetry of economic policies that allow for American businesses to extract Philippine resources and exploit the country's people. To use Lingat's words, national democratic activists want Philippine "political governance be free from foreign control, not having the CIA back a president or oust another—an election that's free from foreign influence. From there, there are a variety of ways for us to start addressing a lot of the root issues of Philippine society. And at [its] core, the role of the U.S. is just getting out of the Philippines."[129] For that reason, I do not suggest that the United States take heavy action *in* the Philippines in a historical justice project; for national democratic activists, overstepping into the Philippines would represent further imperialist action.

What these activists hope for is that through educating and spreading awareness of how imperialism has harmed Filipinos and imperialized peoples, Americans will act to keep their government accountable for its 120 years of ongoing imperialist and neo-imperialist actions, from military operations, violence and support for corrupt systems in the Philippines, and unbalanced economic agreements. These activists—being from an organization that is not only national democratic, but has a socialist, of-the-people perspective—believed that restitution can be demanded from the people, that the people can organize and mobilize to shape the future nature of the United States. This is why a future-oriented perspective in a historical justice project for imperialism is important: Imperialism is so widespread and entrenched in American identity in such obscure ways, that to reshape it requires a grassroots, bottom-up approach. The protracted nature of the NDM mirrors the protracted nature of imperialist efforts. The United

[129] Joelle Lingat.

States as it is right now, according to Valdez, will not likely change toward my or these activists' demands of redress or restitution unless a grassroots effort begins first:

> I don't think the U.S. as an institution, as a government institution, would give that apology. It's their nature as an imperialist country to go on and conquer or whatever, build empires throughout the world. … I don't think that would stop in the near future and that they'd apologize for it. It's upon the people to build the power of the people, to educate, to organize, and to mobilize.[130]

Likewise, Ron Chew, an activist and friend of the KDP's Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, said that the two would have appreciated change to begin as a people's effort: "Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes believed—as most activists of their generation did—that if social change was to come to the United States, it had to come from many people pooling their efforts and forming a collective voice of defiance against the status quo."[131]

Making redress a project of the people first is not uncommon. In fact, I redress requires a great deal of activist work because for redress and apology for historical perpetrations to occur at a genuine, effective level, the effort must be demanded and engaged by the perpetrated, in this case, Filipinos. From the work these activists have conducted as the NDM since the 1970s—and even before through a fight for independence in the 1890s—the protracted nature of the NDM will hopefully change attitudes in American society and allow for campaigns like the Take Back Our Education program to mobilize the American people to demand from its government the reduction of military funding used to hurt the Philippine people and redirect it to educational programs, a truth commission, or maybe other further reparative programs, apologies, historical museum work, or other suggestions beyond the ones in this paper. My suggestions are my own, based on my research, but since the activism I have examined is of the people, the results that

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[130] Jonna Valdez.

[131] Ron Chew, 6.

unfold from the initial steps I suggest will continue shaping themselves as Filipinos, Pinoys, and Pinays demand.[132]

As I stated earlier, for members of the NDM, imperialist legacies and persistence makes the past, present, and future weave together. Jose Rizal wrote that "to foretell the destiny of a nation, it is necessary to open the book that tells of her past."[133] Over 120 years later, that quote resonates with the efforts national democratic activists have taken since to continue the revolution for independence that Rizal began while also haunting America in its need to recognize its own past. Rizal, the KDP, Anakbayan, and the thousands of activists who have come and gone to realize Philippine sovereignty show how revolution, activism, and historical understanding intersect and demand recognition and action by the United States for its imperialist legacies.

[132] Pinoys and Pinays are terms popularly used for individuals of the Philippine diaspora.

[133] Wall text, *Rizal Shrine*, Museum of Jose Rizal, Fort Santiago, Manila, Philippines.
Fort Santiago was where Rizal was executed by the Spanish.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

AB: An abbreviation commonly used in referring to Anakbayan.

CJDV: Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes. Established by KDP members after its members Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo were assassinated on June 1, 1981. The group investigated the murders and ultimately found that President Ferdinand Marcos had gathered intelligence on KDP members from U.S. intelligence and consequently hired gang members to kill Viernes and Domingo.

CPP: Communist Party of the Philippines; began in 1968. The party began under the leadership of Jose Maria Sison but went underground after martial law began in 1972. It has remained underground since.

KDP: Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (Union of Democratic Filipinos); 1973-1986.

LFS: The League of Filipino Students. This organization was a precursor to Anakbayan in the Philippines.

LIC: Low Intensity Conflict, a style of localized military conflict between nations involving selective enforcement by one state (America) to ensure the compliance of its policies and objectives with another state (Philippines).

NDM: National Democratic Movement. A movement of left-wing, progressive activists and organizations that seeks genuine Philippine national liberation from foreign imperialist powers and strengthen the national democratic rights of Philippines citizens.

NPA: New People's Army, the armed wing of the CPP. It is also underground and consists mostly of peasant-class members.

PKP: Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, the pre-1968 Communist party in the Philippines.

PSR: *Philippine Society and Revolution*, written by Jose Maria Sison under the pseudonym Amado Guerrero and published in 1970. It is the foundational text of the NDM and of national democratic organizations both in the Philippines and United States.

Appendix 2: Jose Maria Sison's 10-Point Plan

1. Overthrow the forces of U.S. imperialist and feudal oppression.
2. Establish a people's democratic state and a coalition or united front government.
3. Fight for national unity and democratic rights.
4. Follow the principle of democratic centralism.
5. Build and cherish the people's army [the NPA].
6. Solve the land problem.

7. Carry out national industrialization.
8. Promote a national, scientific, and mass culture.
9. Respect the national minorities' right to self-determination.
10. Adopt an active, independent foreign policy.[134]

Appendix 3: Anakbayan's 8-Point Program

1. Arouse, organize, and mobilize the biggest numbers of the youth to join the National Democratic struggle of the toiling masses against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism.
2. Build the strong alliance of the Filipino youth; youth workers, farmers, urban poor, students, professional, women, migrant, Moro and other national minorities;
3. Expand and consolidate the struggle of the masses; fight for the just and immediate interests of the youth for jobs, land, education, political and civil rights, social services, and strongly link them to the National Democratic line, program, and analusis among youth and people;
4. Raise the political and national democratic consciousnes of its members and the youth; study and spread the National Democratic line, program, and analysis of the countryside, and actively participate in their struggles.
5. Consciously and systemically implement mass work and integration of the youth into the ranks of the workers and peasants on the picket lines and in the countryside, and actively participate in their struggles.
6. Be a strong ally of the toiling masses and train chapter leaders and youth cadres for the National Democratic movement.
7. Associate and cooperate with other youth organizations and groups in their concrete goals and struggles.
8. Strongly unite with youth organizations abroad and form a broad anti-imperialist front of the youth: form chapters of Anakbayan among the ranks of the Filipino youth abroad.[135]

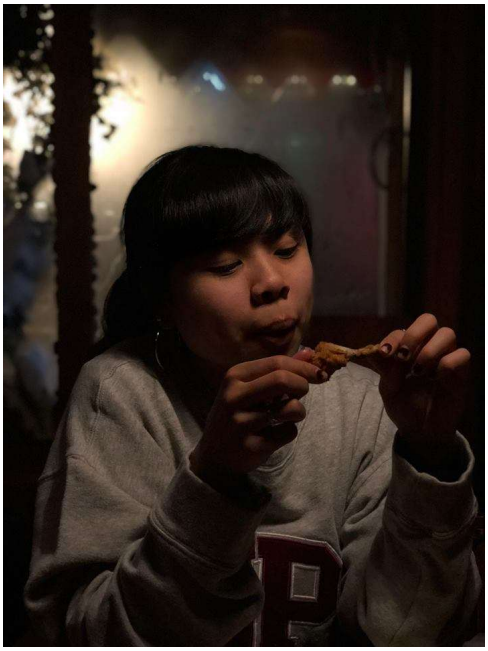
Appendix 3: Biographies of Anakbayan Members from Oral Histories

The following are the biographies of the Anakbayan members I conducted oral histories with. The information was provided by each individual and from information I found in my research. Photo courtesy is of each individual:

[134] Jose Maria Sison and Rainer Werning, 51-52.

[135] "ANAKBAYAN Orientation," Anakbayan, June 4, 2011 (http://www.anakbayan.org/anakbayan-orientation/)

Joelle Lingat



Lingat is 24 years old. She was born in Florida to her mother who immigrated from the Philippines, and Lingat later moved to Jersey City, New Jersey. However, she notes that she calls her motherlands the Philippines and has found home in the Filipino diaspora. She went to Oberlin College, where an organization called Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment (FIRE) did a workshop, and they referred her to join Anakbayan-New Jersey in Jersey City since FIRE was in New York. She joined Anakbayan in 2012, then continued as the Chairperson of Anakbayan New Jersey, the Secretary General of Anakbayan NJ, and now serves as the National Secretary General. She graduated from Oberlin College in 2014, where she served as Chairs of the Asian American Alliance and Filipinx American Student Association. She recently graduated law school from CUNY School of Law, and her activist work has informed her decision to professionally pursue international human rights work.

Yves Nibungco

Nibungco is 30 years old. He is from Navotas City, Metro Manila, and immigrated to the United States when he was 16 years old, first coming to Palmdale, California in 2005 and to Jersey City, New Jersey in 2007. He first heard of Anakbayan when he was in high school when Anakbayan contributed to the ousting of Joseph Estrada in 2001, but after returning to the Philippines in February 2008, his friend who was recruited by Anakbayan at the University of the Philippines encouraged him to join in Quezon City. When Nibungco returned to New Jersey, he was referred to join AB-NJ in March 2008. He was the Deputy Secretary General of AB-NJ before getting elected as the first National Chairperson of Anakbayan USA in 2012. He helped organize young and newly immigrated Filipinos in Jersey City to participate in Anakbayan's campaigns—particularly on human rights issues under Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He currently works as a municipal employee in Jersey City, serving the immigrant community there with immigration assistance.

Gian Parel
Parel is 25 years old. They joined Anakbayan-NJ in the fall of 2014 after Anakbayan did a workshop at Oberlin College in 2012. They immigrated to the United States at a young age with their family and moved to Louisville, Kentucky. They are the 2017-2018 Secretary General of Anakbayan-New Jersey and is also a neuroscience research assistant.

Renato "Nato" Reyes, Jr.
Reyes was the 1998 founding chair of Anakbayan in the Philippines. He was the Philippine national secretary general of the League of Filipino Students from 1997 to 1999. He currently works full-time as the secretary general for Bayan, a broad organization that coalesces different national democratic organizations.

Jonna Valdez
Valdez is 34 years old. She is from Pasig in Manila, Philippines and started coming to the United States in 1999 with her mother, who was later petitioned by a daycare center to remain in America. Valdez became politicized at the University of the Philippines at the College of Fine Arts where she joined student council and worked with the Student Alliance for Democratic Rights of the University of the Philippines (STAND UP). When she came to the United States in 2006 permanently, she found other politicized Filipinos in Jersey City and formed the Anakbayan-NY/NJ chapter. She is no longer in Anakbayan, but she is works with GABRIELA, specifically in helping establish its New Jersey chapter in 2017. She is a graphic designer and currently workers as a housekeeper.

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